



**SHANTIDEVA'S**

**BODHISATTVACHARYAVATARA**

**THE WAY OF THE BODHISATTVA**



**REVISED PADMAKARA TRANSLATION**

**Text Only  
e-Book Ready**



# The Way of the Bodhisattva



## 1. The Excellence of Bodhichitta

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

1.

To those who go in bliss,<sup>25</sup> the dharmakāya<sup>26</sup> they possess, and all their heirs,<sup>27</sup>  
To all those worthy of respect, I reverently bow.  
According to the scriptures, I shall now in brief describe  
The practice of the Bodhisattva discipline.

2.

Here I shall say nothing that has not been said before,  
And in the art of prosody I have no skill.  
I therefore have no thought that this might be of benefit to others;  
I wrote it only to habituate my mind.

3.

My faith will thus be strengthened for a little while,  
That I might grow accustomed to this virtuous way.  
But others who now chance upon my words  
May profit also, equal to myself in fortune.

4.

So hard to find the ease and wealth<sup>28</sup>  
Whereby the aims of beings may be gained.  
If now I fail to turn it to my profit,  
How could such a chance be mine again?

5.

Just as on a dark night black with clouds,  
The sudden lightning glares and all is clearly shown,  
Likewise rarely, through the Buddhas' power,  
Virtuous thoughts rise, brief and transient, in the world.

6.

Virtue, thus, is weak; and always  
Evil is of great and overwhelming strength.  
Except for perfect bodhichitta,  
What other virtue is there that can lay it low.

7.

For many aeons deeply pondering,  
The mighty Sages<sup>29</sup> saw its benefits,  
Whereby unnumbered multitudes  
Are brought with ease to supreme joy.

8.

Those who wish to crush the many sorrows of existence,  
Who wish to quell the pain of living beings,  
Who wish to have experience of a myriad joys  
Should never turn away from bodhichitta.

9.

Should bodhichitta come to birth  
In those who suffer, chained in prisons of saṃsāra,  
In that instant they are called the children of the Blissful One,  
Revered by all the world, by gods and humankind.

10.

For like the supreme substance of the alchemists,  
It takes our impure flesh and makes of it  
The body of a Buddha, jewel beyond all price.  
Such is bodhichitta. Let us grasp it firmly!

11.

Since the boundless wisdom of the only guide of beings  
Perfectly examined and perceived its priceless worth,  
Those who wish to leave this state of wandering  
Should hold well to this precious bodhichitta.

12.

All other virtues, like the plantain tree,  
Produce their fruit, but then their force is spent.  
Alone the marvelous tree of bodhichitta  
Constantly bears fruit and grows unceasingly.

13.

As though they pass through perils guarded by a hero,  
Even those weighed down with dreadful wickedness  
Will instantly be freed through having bodhichitta.  
Why do those who fear their sins not have recourse to it?

14.

Just as by the fire that will destroy the world,  
Great sins are surely and at once consumed by it.  
Its benefits are thus unbounded  
As the Wise and Loving Lord<sup>30</sup> explained to Sudhana.

15.

Bodhichitta, the awakened mind,  
Is known in brief to have two aspects:

First, aspiring, *bodhichitta in intention*;  
Then *active bodhichitta*, practical engagement.

16.  
As corresponding to the wish to go  
And then to setting out,  
The wise should understand respectively  
The difference that divides these two.

17.  
From *bodhichitta in intention*  
Great results arise for those still turning in the wheel of life;  
Yet merit does not rise from it in ceaseless streams  
As is the case with *active bodhichitta*.

18.  
For when, with irreversible intent,  
The mind embraces bodhichitta,  
Willing to set free the endless multitudes of beings,  
In that instant, from that moment on,

19.  
A great and unremitting stream,  
A strength of wholesome merit,  
Even during sleep and inattention,  
Rises equal to the vastness of the sky.

20.  
This the Tathāgata,<sup>31</sup>  
In the sūtra Subāhu requested,<sup>32</sup>  
Said with reasoned argument  
For those inclined to lesser paths.

21.  
If with kindly generosity  
One merely has the wish to soothe  
The aching heads of other beings,  
Such merit knows no bounds.

22.  
No need to speak, then, of the wish  
To drive away the endless pain  
Of each and every living being,  
Bringing them unbounded excellence.

23.  
Could our father or our mother  
Ever have so generous a wish?  
Do the very gods, the *ṛiṣhis*,<sup>33</sup> even Brahmā<sup>34</sup>  
Harbor such benevolence as this?

24.

For in the past they never,  
Even in their dreams,  
Wished something like this even for themselves.  
How could they do so for another's sake?

25.

This aim to bring the benefit of beings,  
A benefit that others wish not even for themselves,  
This noble, jewellike state of mind  
Arises truly wondrous, never seen before.

26.

This pain-dispelling draft,  
This cause of joy for those who wander through the world,<sup>35</sup>  
This precious attitude, this jewel of mind—  
How shall we calculate its merit?

27.

If the simple thought to be of help to others  
Exceeds in worth the worship of the Buddhas,  
What need is there to speak of actual deeds  
That bring about the weal and benefit of beings?

28.

For beings long to free themselves from misery,  
But misery itself they follow and pursue.  
They long for joy, but in their ignorance  
Destroy it, as they would their foe.

29.

But those who fill with bliss  
All beings destitute of joy,  
Who cut all pain and suffering away  
From those weighed down with misery,

30.

Who drive away the darkness of their ignorance—  
What virtue could be matched with theirs?  
What friend could be compared to them?  
What merit is there similar to this?

31.

If someone who returns a favor  
Is deserving of some praise,  
Why need we speak of Bodhisattvas,  
Those who do good even unsolicited?

32.

People praise as virtuous donors  
Those who with contempt support

A few with plain and ordinary food:  
A moment's gift that feeds for only half a day.

33.

What need is there to speak of those  
Who long bestow on countless multitudes  
The peerless joy of blissful Buddhahood,  
The ultimate fulfillment of their hopes?

34.

All those who harbor evil in their minds  
Against such lords of generosity, the Buddha's heirs,  
Will stay in hell, the mighty Sage has said,  
For ages equal to the moments of their malice.

35.

But joyous and devoted thoughts  
Will yield abundant fruits in greater strength.  
Even in great trouble, Bodhisattvas  
Never bring forth wrong; their virtues naturally increase.

36.

To them in whom this precious jewel of mind  
Is born—to them I bow!  
I go for refuge to those springs of happiness  
Who bring their very enemies to perfect bliss.

## 2. [Confession](#)

1.

To the Buddhas, those thus gone,  
And to the sacred Dharma, spotless and supremely rare,  
And to the Buddha's offspring, oceans of good qualities,  
That I might gain this precious attitude, I make a perfect offering.<sup>36</sup>

2.

I offer every fruit and flower,  
Every kind of healing draft,  
And all the precious gems the world contains,  
With all pure waters of refreshment;

3.

Every mountain wrought of precious jewels,  
All sweet and lonely forest groves,  
The trees of paradise adorned with blossom,  
Trees with branches bowed with perfect fruit;

4.

The perfumed fragrance of divine and other realms,  
All incense, wishing trees, and trees of gems,  
All crops that grow without the tiller's care,  
And every sumptuous object worthy to be offered;

5.

Lakes and meres adorned with lotuses,  
Delightful with the sweet-voiced cries of waterbirds,  
And everything unclaimed and free  
Extending to the margins of the boundless sky.

6.

I hold them all before my mind, and to the mighty Sage, the greatest of our kind,  
And to his heirs, I make a perfect offering.  
Sublime recipients, compassionate lords,  
O think of me with love; accept these gifts of mine!

7.

For, destitute of merit, I am very poor;  
I have no other wealth. And so, protectors,  
You whose wise intentions are for others' good,  
In your great power, receive them for my sake.

8.

Enlightened ones and all your Bodhisattva heirs,  
I offer you my body throughout all my lives.  
Supreme courageous ones accept me totally.  
For with devotion I will be your slave.



9.  
For if you will accept me, I will be  
Undaunted by saṃsāra and will act for beings' sake.  
I'll leave behind the evils of my past,  
And ever after turn my face from them.

10.  
A bathing chamber excellently fragrant,  
With even floors of crystal, radiant and clear,  
And graceful pillars shimmering with gems,  
All hung about with gleaming canopies of pearls—

11.  
There the blissful Buddhas and their heirs  
I'll bathe with many a precious vase,  
Abrim with water fragrant and delightful,  
All to frequent strains of melody and song.

12.  
With cloths of unexampled quality,  
With spotless, perfumed towels I will dry them,  
And offer splendid scented clothes,  
Well-dyed and of surpassing excellence.

13.  
With different garments, light and supple,  
And a hundred beautiful adornments,  
I will grace sublime Samantabhadra,<sup>37</sup>  
Mañjughoṣha, Lokeshvara, and their kin.

14.  
And with a sumptuous fragrance which  
Pervades a thousand million worlds,  
I will anoint the bodies of the mighty Sages,  
Gleaming bright like burnished gold refined and cleansed.

15.  
I place before the mighty Sages, perfect objects of my worship,  
Glorious flowers like lotus and mandāravā,  
The utpala, and other fragrant blossoms,  
Worked and twined in lovely scented garlands.

16.  
I will offer swelling clouds of frankincense,  
Whose ambient perfume ravishes the mind,  
And various foods and every kind of drink,  
All delicacies worthy of the gods.

17.  
I will offer precious lamps  
Arranged in rows on lotuses of gold,



A carpet of sweet flowers scattering  
Upon the level, incense-sprinkled ground.

18.

To those whose very nature is compassion  
I will give vast palaces, resounding with fair praise,  
All decked with precious pearls and beauteous pendant gems,  
Gleaming jewels that deck the amplitude of space.

19.

Fair and precious parasols adorned with golden shafts,  
All bordered round with hems of precious jewels,  
Upright, well-proportioned, pleasing to the eye,  
Again, all this I give to all the Buddhas.

20.

May a host of other offerings,  
And clouds of ravishing sweet melody  
That solaces the pain of living beings  
Arise and constantly abide.

21.

May rains of flowers and every precious gem  
Fall down in an unceasing stream  
Upon the Jewels of Sacred Dharma,<sup>38</sup>  
Images and all supports for offering.

22.

Just as Mañjughoṣha and the like  
Made offering to all the Conquerors,  
I do likewise to all the Buddhas our protectors,  
And to all their Bodhisattva children.

23.

To these vast oceans of good qualities  
I offer praise, a sea of airs and harmonies.  
May clouds of tuneful eulogy  
Ascend unceasingly before them.

24.

To Buddhas of the past, the present, and all future time,  
And to the Dharma and Sublime Assembly,  
With bodies many as the grains of dust  
Upon the earth, I will prostrate and bow.<sup>39</sup>

25.

To shrines and all supports  
Of bodhichitta I bow down;  
To abbots who transmit the vows, to every learned master,  
And to all sublime practitioners of Dharma.

26.

Until the essence of enlightenment is reached,  
I go for refuge to the Buddhas.  
Also I take refuge in the Dharma  
And in all the host of Bodhisattvas.

27.

To perfect Buddhas and to Bodhisattvas,  
In all directions where they may reside,  
To them who are the sovereigns of great mercy,  
I press my palms together, praying thus:

28.

“In this and all my other lives,  
While turning in the round without beginning,  
Blindly I have brought forth evil,  
And incited others to commit the same.

29.

“Deceived and overmastered by my ignorance,  
I have taken pleasure in such sin,<sup>40</sup>  
And seeing now the blame of it,  
O great protectors, I confess it earnestly!

30.

“Whatever I have done against the Triple Gem,  
Against my parents, teachers, and the rest,  
Through force of my defilements,  
In my body, speech, and mind,

31.

“All the evil I, a sinner, have committed,  
All the wicked deeds that cling to me,  
The frightful things that I contrived  
I openly declare to you, the teachers of the world.

32.

“It may be that my death will come to me  
Before my evil has been cleansed.  
How then can I be freed from it?  
I pray you, quickly grant me your protection!”

33.

We cannot trust the wanton Lord of Death.  
The task complete or still to do, he will not wait.  
In health or sickness, therefore, none of us can trust  
Our fleeting, momentary lives.

34.

And we must pass away, forsaking all.  
But I, devoid of understanding,

Have, for sake of friend and foe alike,  
Provoked and brought about so many wrongs.

35.

But all my foes will cease to be,  
And all my friends will cease to be,  
And I will also cease to be,  
And likewise everything will cease to be.

36.

All that I possess and use  
Is like the fleeting vision of a dream.  
It fades into the realms of memory,  
And fading, will be seen no more.

37.

And even in the brief course of this present life,  
So many friends and foes have passed away,  
Because of whom, the evils I have done  
Still lie, unbearable, before me.

38.

The thought came never to my mind  
That I too am a brief and passing thing.  
And so, through hatred, lust, and ignorance,  
I have committed many sins.

39.

Never halting night or day,  
My life drains constantly away,  
And from no other source does increase come.  
How can there not be death for such as me?

40.

There I'll be, prostrate upon my bed,  
And all around, my family and friends.  
But I alone shall be the one to feel  
The cutting of the thread of life.

41.

And when the heralds of the Deadly King<sup>41</sup> have gripped me,  
What help to me will be my friends and kin?  
For then life's virtue is my one defense,  
And this, alas, is what I shrugged away.

42.

O protectors! I, so little heeding,  
Hardly guessed at horror such as this—  
And all for this brief, transient existence,  
I have done so many evil things.

43.

The day they take him to the scaffold,  
Where they will tear off his limbs,  
A man is changed, transfigured by his fear:  
His mouth is dry, his eyes start from his brow.

44.

No need to say how stricken I shall be  
When overcome and sick with dreadful fear,  
I'm seized by forms so horrible to see,  
The frightful servants of the Lord of Death.

45.

Who can give me safe protection  
From this horror, from this frightful dread?  
And then I'll search the four directions,  
Seeking help, with panic-stricken eyes.

46.

But in those four directions no protection shall I find.  
And I shall sink into despairing woe.  
No refuge will there be for me;  
At such a time, what shall I do?

47.

Thus, from this day forward I take refuge  
In the Buddhas, guardians of beings,  
Who labor to protect all wanderers,  
Those mighty ones who scatter every fear.

48.

And in the Dharma they have realized in their hearts,  
Which drives away the terrors of saṃsāra,  
And in all the host of Bodhisattvas  
Likewise I will perfectly take refuge.

49.

Gripped by dread, beside myself with anguish,  
To Samantabhadra I will give myself;  
My body I myself will give  
To Mañjughoṣha, gentle and melodious.

50.

To him whose deeds of mercy never fail,  
My lord Avalokita,  
I cry out from depths of misery,  
"Protect me now an evildoer!"

51.

Now to the noble one, Ākāśhagarbha,  
And to Kṣhitigarbha, from my heart I call.<sup>42</sup>

To all protectors, great, compassionate,  
I cry to them in search of refuge.

52.  
To Vajrapāṇi I shall fly,  
For at the sight of him  
All vengeful things like Yama's host  
Escape in terror to the four directions.

53.  
Formerly your words I have transgressed,  
But having seen these terrors all around,  
I come to you for refuge praying:  
Swiftly drive away my fear!

54.  
For if, alarmed by common ailments,  
I must implement the doctor's words,  
What need to speak of when I'm constantly brought low  
By ills like lust and faults a hundredfold?

55.  
And if, by one of these alone,  
The dwellers in the world are all thrown down,  
And if no other remedy exists,  
No other healing elsewhere to be found

56.  
Than words of the all-knowing doctor,  
Which uproot our every ill,  
The thought to turn on him deaf ears  
Is abject and contemptible stupidity.

57.  
Along a small and ordinary cliff  
If I must pick my way with special care,  
What need to speak of that long-lasting chasm  
Plunging to the depths a thousand leagues?

58.  
"Today, at least, I shall not die."  
So rash to lull myself with words like these!  
My dissolution and my hour of death  
Will come to me, of this there is no doubt.

59.  
Who can give me fearlessness,  
What sure escape is there from this?  
It's certain that I'm going to die,  
So how can I relax, my mind at ease?

60.

Of life's experience, all seasons past,  
What's left to me, what now remains?  
By clinging to what now is here no more,  
My teacher's precepts I have disobeyed.

61.

And when this life is left behind,  
And with it all my kith and kin,  
I must set out on strange paths all alone:  
Why make so much of all my friends and foes?<sup>43</sup>

62.

How instead can I make sure  
To rid myself of evil, only cause of sorrow?  
This should be my one concern,  
My only thought both night and day.

63.

The wrongs that I have done  
Through ignorant stupidity:  
All actions evil by their nature<sup>44</sup>  
And transgressions of the precepts,

64.

Fearing all the pains to come  
I join my palms and ceaselessly prostrate,  
And everything I will confess  
Directly in the sight of my protectors.

65.

I pray you, guides and guardians of the world,  
To take me as I am, a sinful man.  
And all these actions, evil as they are,  
I promise I will never do again.

### 3. Taking Hold of Bodhichitta

1.  
With joy I celebrate the virtue that relieves all beings  
From the sorrows of the states of loss,<sup>45</sup>  
Exulting in the happy states enjoyed  
By those who yet are suffering.<sup>46</sup>
2.  
I revel in the stores of virtue,  
Cause of gaining the enlightened state,  
And celebrate the freedom won  
By living beings from the round of pain.
3.  
And in the Buddhahood of the protectors I delight  
And in the grounds of realization<sup>47</sup> of the Buddhas' heirs.
4.  
Their enlightened attitude, an ocean of great good,  
That seeks to place all beings in the state of bliss,  
And every action for the benefit of beings:  
Such is my delight and joy.
5.  
And so I join my hands and pray  
The Buddhas who reside in every quarter:  
Kindle now the Dharma's light  
For those who grope, bewildered, in the dark of pain!
6.  
I join my hands beseeching the enlightened ones  
Who wish to pass into nirvāṇa:  
Do not leave us wandering in blindness,  
Stay among us for unnumbered ages!
7.  
Through these actions now performed<sup>48</sup>  
And all the virtues I have gained,  
May all the pain of every living being  
Be wholly scattered and destroyed!
8.  
For all those ailing in the world,  
Until their every sickness has been healed,  
May I myself become for them  
The doctor, nurse, the medicine itself.



9.  
Raining down a flood of food and drink,  
May I dispel the ills of thirst and famine.  
And in the aeons marked by scarcity and want,<sup>49</sup>  
May I myself appear as drink and sustenance.

10.  
For sentient beings, poor and destitute,  
May I become a treasure ever-plentiful,  
And lie before them closely in their reach,  
A varied source of all that they might need.

11.  
My body, thus, and all my goods besides,  
And all my merits gained and to be gained,  
I give them all and do not count the cost,  
To bring about the benefit of beings.

12.  
Nirvāṇa is attained by giving all,  
Nirvāṇa is the object of my striving;  
And all must be surrendered in a single instant,  
Therefore it is best to give it all to others.

13.  
This body I have now resigned  
To serve the pleasure of all living beings.  
Let them ever kill, despise, and beat it,  
Using it according to their wish.

14.  
And though they treat it like a toy,  
Or make of it the butt of every mockery,  
My body has been given up to them.  
Why should I make so much of it?

15.  
And so let beings do to me  
Whatever does not bring them injury.  
Whenever they may think of me,  
Let this not fail to bring them benefit.

16.  
And if in my regard they have  
A thought of anger or respect,  
May these states always be the cause  
Whereby their good and wishes are fulfilled.

17.  
All those who slight me to my face  
Or do to me some other evil,

Even if they blame or slander me,  
May they attain the fortune of enlightenment!

18.  
May I be a guard for those who are protectorless,  
A guide for those who journey on the road.  
For those who wish to cross the water,  
May I be a boat, a raft, a bridge.

19.  
May I be an isle for those who yearn for land,  
A lamp for those who long for light;  
For all who need a resting place, a bed;  
For those who need a servant, may I be their slave.

20.  
May I be the wishing jewel, the vase of wealth,  
A word of power and the supreme healing,  
May I be the tree of miracles,  
For every being the abundant cow.

21.  
Just like the earth and space itself  
And all the other mighty elements,  
For boundless multitudes of beings  
May I always be the ground of life, the source of varied sustenance.

22.  
Thus for everything that lives,  
As far as are the limits of the sky,  
May I be constantly their source of livelihood  
Until they pass beyond all sorrow.

23.  
Just as all the Buddhas of the past  
Have brought forth the awakened mind,  
And in the precepts of the Bodhisattvas  
Step-by-step abode and trained,

24.  
Likewise, for the benefit of beings,  
I will bring to birth the awakened mind,  
And in those precepts, step-by-step,  
I will abide and train myself.

25.  
Those who thus with clear intelligence  
Take hold of the awakened mind with bright and lucid joy,  
That they may now increase what they have gained,  
Should lift their hearts with praises such as these:

26.

“Today my life has given fruit.  
This human state has now been well assumed.  
Today I take my birth in Buddha’s line,  
And have become the Buddha’s child and heir.

27.

“In every way, then, I will undertake  
Activities befitting such a rank.  
And I will do no act to mar  
Or compromise this high and faultless lineage.

28.

“For I am like a blind man who has found  
A precious gem inside a heap of dust.  
For so it is, by some strange chance,  
That bodhichitta has been born in me.

29.

“This is the supreme draft of immortality  
That slays the Lord of Death, the slaughterer of beings,  
The rich unfailing treasure-mine  
To heal the poverty of wanderers.

30.

“It is the sovereign remedy  
That perfectly allays all maladies.  
It is the tree that gives relief  
To those who wander wearily the pathways of existence.

31.

“It is the universal bridge that saves  
All wandering beings from the states of loss,  
The rising moon of the enlightened mind  
That soothes the sorrows born of the afflictions.

32.

“It is the mighty sun that utterly dispels  
The misty ignorance of wandering beings,  
The creamy butter, rich and full,  
That’s churned from milk of holy teaching.

33.

“Living beings! Wayfarers upon life’s paths,  
Who wish to taste the riches of contentment,  
Here before you is the supreme bliss.  
Here, O ceaseless travelers, is your fulfillment!

34.

“And so, today, within the sight of all protectors,  
I summon beings, calling them to Buddhahood.

And, till that state is reached, to every earthly joy!  
May gods and demigods and all the rest rejoice!”

## 4. Carefulness

1.

The children of the Conqueror who thus  
Have firmly grasped this bodhichitta,  
Should never turn aside from it,  
Strive never to transgress its disciplines.

2.

Whatever was begun without due heed,  
And all that was not properly conceived,  
Although a promise and a pledge were given,  
It is right to reconsider: Shall I act or not?

3.

Yet what the Buddhas and their heirs  
Have scrutinized in their great wisdom,  
I myself have probed and scrutinized.  
Why should I now procrastinate?

4.

For if I bind myself with promises  
But fail to carry out my words in deed,  
Then every being will have been betrayed.  
What destiny must lie in store for me?

5.

If in the teachings it is said  
That those who in their thoughts intend  
To give a small and paltry thing but then draw back  
Will take rebirth as hungry spirits,

6.

How can I expect a happy destiny  
If from my heart I summon  
Wandering beings to the highest bliss,  
But then deceive and fail them?

7.

As for those who, losing bodhichitta,  
Lead others nonetheless to liberation,  
Karmic law is inconceivable  
And only understood by the Omniscient.<sup>50</sup>

8.

This failure, for the Bodhisattva,  
Is the gravest of all downfalls.  
For should it ever come to pass,  
The good of every being is thrown down.

9.

And anyone who, for a single instant,  
Halts the merit of a Bodhisattva  
Wanders endlessly in evil states,  
Because the welfare of all beings is reduced.

10.

Destroy a single being's joy  
And you will work the ruin of yourself.  
No need to speak of bringing low  
The joy of beings infinite as space itself!

11.

And those who circle in saṃsāra,  
Mixing powerful downfalls  
With the power of bodhichitta back and forth,  
Will long be hindered from the Bodhisattva grounds.

12.

And so, according to my promise,  
I will act attentively.  
From this day forth, if I now fail to strive,  
I'll fall from low to even lower states.

13.

Striving for the benefit of all that lives,  
Unnumbered Buddhas have already lived and passed away.  
But I, by virtue of my sins, have failed  
To come within the compass of their healing works.<sup>51</sup>

14.

And this will always be my lot  
If I continue to behave like this,  
And I will suffer pains and bondage,  
Wounds and laceration in the lower realms.

15.

The appearance of the Buddhas in the world,  
True faith and the attainment of a human form,  
An aptitude for good: all these are rare.  
When will they come to me again?

16.

Today, indeed, I'm hale and well,  
I have enough to eat and I am not in danger.  
But this life is fleeting, unreliable,  
My body is like something briefly lent.

17.

And yet the way I act is such  
That I shall not regain a human life!

And losing this, my precious human form,  
My evils will be many, virtues none.<sup>52</sup>

18.  
Here is now my chance for wholesome deeds,  
But if I fail to practice virtue,  
What will be my lot, what shall I do,  
Bewildered by the sorrows of the lower realms?

19.  
Never, there, performing any virtue,  
Only ever piling up my sins,  
And for a hundred million ages,  
I'll not even hear of happy destinies.<sup>53</sup>

20.  
This is why Lord Buddha has declared  
That like a turtle that perchance can place  
Its head within a yoke adrift upon the mighty sea  
This human birth is difficult to find!

21.  
If through the evil action of a single instant  
I must spend an aeon in the hell of Unrelenting Pain,  
The evils in saṃsāra stored from time without beginning—  
No need to say that they will keep me from the states of bliss!

22.  
And mere experience of such pain  
Does not result in being freed from it.  
For in the very suffering of such states,  
More evil will occur, and then in great abundance.

23.  
Thus, having found this moment of reprieve,  
If I now fail to train myself in virtue,  
What greater folly could there ever be?  
How more could I betray myself?

24.  
If having understood all this,  
I'm stupidly despondent still,  
Then at the moment of my death,  
My sorrows will be black indeed.

25.  
And when my body burns so long  
In fires of hell so unendurable,  
My mind, there is no doubt, will also be tormented,  
Burned in fires of unendurable regret.



26.

For it's as if by chance that I have gained  
This state so hard to find, wherein to help myself.  
If now, while having such discernment,  
I am once again consigned to hell,

27.

I am as if benumbed by sorcery,  
As if reduced to total mindlessness.  
I do not know what dulls my wits.  
O what is it that has me in its grip?

28.

Anger, lust, these enemies of mine,  
Are limbless and devoid of faculties.  
They have no bravery, no cleverness;  
How then have they reduced me to such slavery?

29.

They dwell within my mind  
And at their pleasure injure me.  
All this I suffer meekly, unresenting—  
Thus my abject patience, all displaced!

30.

If all the gods and demigods besides  
Together came against me as my foes,  
They would be powerless to throw me down  
To fires of hell of Unrelenting Pain.

31.

And yet the mighty fiend of my afflictions  
Flings me in an instant headlong down  
To where the mighty lord of mountains<sup>54</sup>  
Would be burned, its very ashes all consumed.

32.

O my enemy, afflictive passion,  
Endless and beginningless companion!  
No other enemy indeed  
Is able to endure so long!

33.

All other foes that I appease and wait upon  
Will show me favors, give me every aid,  
But should I serve my dark defiled emotions,  
They will only harm me, draw me down to grief.

34.

If thus my ancient and unceasing foes,  
The wellspring only of my growing pain,

Can lodge so safe within my heart,  
How can I live so blithe and fearless in this wheel of life?

35.

And if the jail guards of the prisons of saṃsāra,  
The butchers and tormentors of infernal realms,  
All lurk within me in the web of craving,  
What joy can ever be my destiny?

36.

I will not leave the fight until, before my eyes,  
These enemies of mine are all destroyed.  
For if, aroused to fury by the merest slight,  
Incapable of sleep until the scores are settled,

37.

Proud but wretched rivals, destined all to suffer when they die,  
Will draw the battle lines and do their best to win,  
And careless of the pain of cut and thrust,  
Will stand their ground refusing to give way,

38.

No need to say that I will not lose heart,  
Regardless of the hardships of the fray.  
From this day forth I'll strive to crush  
These foes whose very nature is to bring me pain.

39.

The wounds inflicted by the enemy in futile wars  
Are flaunted by the soldier as a prize.  
So in the high endeavor, for so great a thing,  
Why should I be dismayed by hurt or injury?

40.

When fishers, butchers, farmers, and the like,  
Intending just to gain their livelihood,  
Will suffer all the miseries of heat and cold,  
Why, for beings' happiness, should those like me not bear the same?

41.

When I pledged myself to free from their afflictions  
Beings who abide in every region,  
Stretching to the limits of the sky,  
I was myself not free from such defilements.

42.

To speak like that, not knowing my capacity,  
Were these not, truly, but a madman's words?  
More reason then for never drawing back  
Abandoning the fight against defiled affliction.<sup>55</sup>

43.

This shall be my all-consuming passion.  
Filled with rancor I will wage my war!  
Defilement of this kind will halt defilement  
And for this reason it shall not be spurned.

44.

Better if I perish in the fire,  
Better that my head be severed from my body  
Than ever I should serve or reverence  
My mortal enemies, defiled emotions.

45.

Common foes, when driven from the state,  
Retreat and base themselves in other lands,  
And muster all their strength the better to return.  
But enemy afflictions are without such stratagems.

46.

Miserable defilements, scattered by the eye of wisdom!  
Where will you now run, when driven from my mind?  
Whence would you return to do me harm?  
But oh, my mind is feeble. I am indolent!

47.

Defilements are not in the object,  
Nor within the faculties, nor somewhere in between.  
And if not elsewhere, where is their abode,  
Whence they inflict their havoc on the world?  
They are simple mirages, and so take heart!  
Banish all your fear and strive to know their nature.  
Why suffer needlessly the pains of hell?

48.

This is how I should reflect and labor,  
That I might apply the precepts thus set forth.  
What invalids in need of medicine  
Ignored their doctor's words and gained their health?

## 5. Vigilant Introspection

1.  
Those who wish to keep the trainings  
Must with perfect self-possession guard their minds.  
Without this guard upon the mind,  
The trainings cannot be preserved.
2.  
Wandering where it will, the elephant of mind,  
Will bring us down to torment in the hell of Unrelenting Pain.  
No worldly beast, however wild and crazed,  
Could bring upon us such calamities.
3.  
If, with mindfulness' rope,  
The elephant of mind is tethered all around,  
Our fears will come to nothing,  
Every virtue drop into our hands.
4.  
Tigers, lions, elephants, and bears,  
Snakes and every hostile foe,  
Those who guard the prisoners in hell,  
Ghosts and ghouls and every evil wraith,
5.  
By simple binding of this mind alone,  
All these things are likewise bound.  
By simple taming of this mind alone,  
All these things are likewise tamed.
6.  
For all anxiety and fear,  
And pain in boundless quantity,  
Their source and wellspring is the mind itself,  
As He who spoke the truth declared.
7.  
The hellish instruments to torture living beings—  
Who invented them for such intent?  
Who has forged this burning iron ground;  
Whence have all these demon-women sprung?<sup>[56](#)</sup>
8.  
All are but the offspring of the sinful mind,  
This the mighty Sage has said.  
Throughout the triple world<sup>[57](#)</sup> therefore  
There is no greater bane than mind itself.

9.  
If transcendent giving is  
To dissipate the poverty of beings,  
In what way—since the poor are always with us—  
Have former Buddhas practiced it?

10.  
Transcendent giving, so the teachings say,  
Consists in the intention to bestow on every being  
All one owns, together with the fruits of such a gift.  
It is indeed a matter of the mind itself.

11.  
Where could beings, fishes, and the rest,  
Be placed to keep them safe from being killed?  
Deciding to refrain from every harmful act  
Is said to be transcendent discipline.

12.  
Harmful beings are everywhere like space itself.  
Impossible it is that all should be suppressed.  
But let this angry mind alone be overthrown,  
And it's as though all foes had been subdued.

13.  
To cover all the earth with sheets of leather—  
Where could such amounts of skin be found?  
But with the leather soles of just my shoes  
It is as though I cover all the earth!

14.  
And thus the outer course of things  
I myself cannot restrain.  
But let me just restrain my mind,  
And what is left to be restrained?

15.  
A clear intent can fructify  
And bring us birth in such as Brahmā's realm.  
The acts of body and of speech are less—  
They do not generate a like result.

16.  
Recitations and austerities,  
Long though they may prove to be,  
If practiced with distracted mind,  
Are futile, so the Knower of Reality has said.

17.  
All those who fail to understand  
The secret of the mind, the greatest of all things,

Although they wish for joy and sorrow's end,  
Will wander to no purpose, uselessly.

18.

Therefore I will take in hand  
And well protect this mind of mine.  
What use to me are many disciplines,  
If I can't guard and discipline my mind?

19.

When in wild, unruly crowds,  
I'm careful and attentive of my wounds;  
Likewise, when in evil company,  
This wound, my mind, I'll constantly protect.

20.

For if I carefully protect my wounds  
Because I fear the pain of minor injuries,  
Why should I not protect the wound that is my mind,  
For fear of being crushed beneath the cliffs of hell?<sup>58</sup>

21.

If this is how I act and live,  
Then even in the midst of evil folk,  
Or even with fair women, all is well.  
My steady keeping of the vows will not decline.

22.

My property, my honor—all can freely go,  
My body and my livelihood as well.  
And even other virtues may decline,  
But never will I let my mind regress.

23.

All you who would protect your minds,  
Maintain your mindfulness and introspection;  
Guard them both, at cost of life and limb,  
I join my hands, beseeching you.

24.

Those disabled by ill health  
Are helpless, powerless to act.  
The mind, when likewise cramped by ignorance,  
Is impotent and cannot do its work.

25.

For those who have no introspection,  
Though they hear the teachings, ponder them, or meditate,  
Like water seeping from a leaking jar,  
Their learning will not settle in their memories.

26.

Many are endowed with joyful diligence.  
They're learned also and imbued with faith,  
But through the fault of lacking introspection,  
They will not escape the stain of sin and downfall.

27.

Lack of introspection is a thief;  
It slinks behind when mindfulness abates.  
And all the merit we have gathered in  
It steals; and down we go to lower realms.

28.

Defilements are a band of robbers  
Looking for their chance to injure us.  
They steal our virtue, when their moment comes,  
And batter out the lives of happy destinies.

29.

Therefore from the gateway of my mind  
My mindfulness shall not have leave to stray.  
And if it wanders, it shall be recalled  
By thoughts of anguish in the lower worlds.

30.

Through fear, and by the counsels of their abbots,  
And staying ever in their teacher's company—  
In those endowed with fortune and devotion  
Mindfulness is cultivated easily.

31.

"The Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas both  
Possess unclouded vision, seeing everything:  
All lies open to their gaze,  
And likewise I am always in their presence."

32.

One who has such thoughts as these  
Will gain devotion and a sense of fear and shame.  
For such a one, the memory of Buddha  
Rises frequently before the mind.

33.

When mindfulness is stationed as a sentinel,  
A guard upon the threshold of the mind,  
Introspection will be likewise there,  
Returning when forgotten or dispersed.

34.

If at the outset, when I check my mind,  
I find that it is tainted with some fault,



I shall be still and self-possessed,  
Unmoving like a piece of wood.

35.  
I shall never, vacantly,  
Allow my gaze to wander all around,  
But rather with a focused mind  
Will always go with eyes cast down.

36.  
But that I may relax my gaze,  
I'll sometimes raise my eyes and look around.  
And if there are some people standing in my sight,  
I'll look at them and greet them with a friendly word.

37.  
And yet, to spy the dangers on the road,  
I'll scrutinize the four directions one by one.  
And when I stop to rest, I'll turn around  
And look behind me, back along my way.

38.  
I will survey the land, in front, behind,  
And carry on or else retrace my steps.  
In every time and place therefore  
I'll know my needs and act accordingly.

39.  
"My body shall remain like this."  
Embarking thus upon a given course,  
From time to time I'll verify  
Inquiring how my body is disposed.

40.  
This rampant elephant, my mind,  
Once tied to that great post, reflection on the Teachings,  
Must now be watched with all my strength  
That it might never slip away.

41.  
Those who strive to master concentration  
Should never for an instant be distracted.  
They should always watch their minds, inquiring,  
"Where is now my mind engaged?"

42.  
When this becomes impossible,  
In case of danger or festivity, I'll act as it seems best.  
For it is taught that rules of discipline  
May be relaxed in times of generosity.<sup>59</sup>

43.

When something has been planned and started on,  
Attention should not drift to other things.  
With thoughts fixed on the chosen target,  
That and that alone should be pursued.

44.

Behaving in this way, all tasks are well performed,  
And nothing is achieved by doing otherwise.  
If thus we act, the secondary defilement,  
Lack of introspection, will not grow.

45.

And if you find yourself engaged  
In different kinds of pointless conversation  
And curious sights, the like of which abound—  
Be rid of all delight and taste for them.

46.

And if you find you're grubbing in the soil,  
Or pulling up the grass or tracing idle patterns on the ground,  
Remembering the precepts of the Blissful One,  
In fear, restrain yourself at once.

47.

And when you feel the wish to move about,  
Or even to express yourself in speech,  
First examine what is in your mind.  
For steadfast ones should act correctly.

48.

When the urge arises in your mind  
To feelings of desire or angry hate,  
Do not act! Be silent, do not speak!  
And like a log of wood be sure to stay.

49.

And when your mind is wild or filled with mockery,  
Or filled with pride and haughty arrogance,  
Or when you would expose another's secret guilt,  
To bring up old dissensions or to act deceitfully,

50.

Or when you want to fish for praise,  
Or criticize and spoil another's name,  
Or use harsh language, sparring for a fight,  
It's then that like a log you should remain.

51.

And when you yearn for wealth, attention, fame,  
A circle of retainers serving you,

And when you look for honors, recognition,  
It's then that like a log you should remain.

52.

And when you are inclined to overlook another's need  
And want to get the best thing for yourself,  
And when you feel the urge to speak,  
It's then that like a log you should remain.

53.

Impatience, indolence, faintheartedness,  
And likewise arrogance and careless speech,  
Attachment to your side—when these arise,  
It's then that like a log you should remain.

54.

Examine thus yourself from every side.  
Take note of your defilements and your pointless efforts.  
For thus the heroes on the Bodhisattva path  
Seize firmly on such faults with proper remedies.

55.

With perfect and unyielding faith,  
With steadfastness, respect, and courtesy,  
With conscientiousness and awe,  
Work calmly for the happiness of others.

56.

Let us not be downcast by the warring wants  
Of childish persons quarreling.  
Their thoughts are bred from conflict and emotion.  
Let us understand and treat them lovingly.

57.

When acting irreproachably,  
For our sake or the sake of others,  
Let us always bear in mind the thought  
That we are self-less, like an apparition.

58.

This supreme freedom of a human life,  
So long awaited, now at last attained!  
Reflecting always thus, maintain your mind  
As steady as Sumeru, king of mountains.

59.

If, O mind, you will not be aggrieved,  
When vultures with their love of flesh  
Are tugging at this body all around,  
Why are you so besotted with it now?

60.

Why, O mind, do you protect this body,  
Taking it to be your own?  
You and it are each a separate entity;  
How ever can it be of use to you?

61.

Why, O foolish mind,  
Don't you appropriate a clean form carved in wood?  
How is it fit to guard  
An unclean engine for the making of impurity?

62.

First, with mind's imagination,  
Shed the covering of skin,  
And with the blade of wisdom, strip  
The flesh from off the bony frame.

63.

And when you have divided all the bones,  
And searched right down amid the very marrow,  
You yourself should ask the question:  
Where is the essential core?

64.

If, persisting in the search,  
You see no underlying essence,  
Why do you protect with such desire  
The body that you now possess?

65.

Its filth you cannot eat, O mind;  
Its blood likewise is not for you to drink;  
Its innards, too, unsuitable to suck—  
This body, what then will you make of it?

66.

And yet it may indeed be kept  
As food to feed the vulture and the fox.  
The value of this human form  
Lies only in the use you make of it.

67.

Whatever you may do to guard and keep it,  
What will you do when  
The ruthless Lord of Death  
Will seize and throw it to the dogs and birds?

68.

If servants who cannot be set to work  
Are not rewarded with supplies and clothing,

Why do you sustain with such great pains  
This body, which, though nourished, will abandon you?

69.

So pay this body due remuneration,  
And then be sure to make it work for you.  
But do not lavish everything  
On what will not bring perfect benefit.

70.

Regard your body as a vessel,  
A simple boat for going here and there.  
Make of it a thing that answers every wish  
To bring about the benefit of beings.

71.

Be the master of yourself  
And have an ever-smiling countenance.  
Rid yourself of scowling, wrathful frowns,  
And be a true and honest friend to all.

72.

Do not, acting inconsiderately,  
Move chairs and furniture so noisily around.  
Likewise do not open doors with violence.  
Take pleasure in the practice of humility.

73.

Hérons, cats, and burglars  
Achieve what they intend  
By going silently and unobserved.  
Such is the constant practice of a sage.

74.

When useful admonitions come unsought  
From those with skill in counseling their fellows,  
Welcome them with humble gratitude,  
And always strive to learn from everyone.

75.

Praise all whose speech is worthy.  
Say, "Your words are excellent!"  
And when you notice others acting well,  
Encourage them in terms of warm approval.

76.

Extol their qualities discreetly;  
When they're praised by others, praise them too.  
But when the qualities they praise are yours,  
Reflect upon their skill in recognizing qualities.

77.

The goal of every act is happiness itself,  
Though, even with great wealth, it's rarely found.  
So take your pleasure in the excellence of others.  
Let them be a heartfelt joy to you.

78.

By acting thus, in this life you'll lose nothing;  
In future lives, great bliss will come to you.  
Wrongdoing brings not joy but pain,  
And in the future dreadful torment.

79.

Speak coherently, appropriately,  
Clear in meaning, pleasantly.  
Rid yourself of craving and aversion;  
Speak gently with moderation.

80.

When you look at others think  
That it will be through them  
That you will come to Buddhahood.  
So look on them with frank and loving hearts.

81.

Always fired by highest aspiration,  
Laboring to implement the antidotes,<sup>60</sup>  
You will reap great virtues in the field of excellence  
And in the fields of benefits and sorrow.<sup>61</sup>

82.

Acting thus with faith and understanding,  
You should always undertake good works.  
And in whatever actions you perform,  
You should not be dependent on another.

83.

The perfections,<sup>62</sup> giving and the rest,  
Progress in sequence, growing in importance.  
The great should never be abandoned for the less,  
And others' good should be regarded as supreme.

84.

Therefore understand this well,  
And always labor for the benefit of beings.  
The Compassionate One farsightedly permits,  
To this end, even what has been proscribed.<sup>63</sup>

85.

Eat only what is needful;  
Share with those who have embraced the discipline,

With those who are defenseless or have fallen into evil states.  
Give everything except the three robes of religion.

86.

The body, used to practice sacred teachings,  
Should not be harmed in meaningless pursuits.  
By acting thus the wishes of all beings  
Will swiftly and completely be attained.

87.

They should not give up their bodies  
Whose compassionate thoughts are not yet pure.  
But let them be surrendered when, both now and in their futures lives,  
Great benefit is thereby gained.

88.

Do not teach the Dharma to the disrespectful:  
To those who, though not sick, wrap cloths around their heads,  
To those who carry weapons, staffs, or parasols,  
To those who are with covered heads.

89.

To those upon the lower paths do not explain the vast and deep,<sup>64</sup>  
Nor tutor women unaccompanied by men.  
And every Dharma, high or low,<sup>65</sup>  
Expound with equal reverence.

90.

Those suited to the teachings of great scope  
Should not be introduced to lesser paths.  
The rules of conduct you should not neglect  
Nor lead astray with talk of sūtras and of mantras.<sup>66</sup>

91.

When you spit and throw away  
Your tooth sticks, you should cover them.<sup>67</sup>  
And it is wrong to foul with urine and with other filth  
The fields and water fit for public use.

92.

When eating, do not gobble noisily,  
Nor stuff and cram your gaping mouth.  
And do not sit with legs outstretched,  
Nor coarsely rub your hands together.

93.

Do not travel, sit, or stay alone  
With women of another house.<sup>68</sup>  
And all that you have seen, or have been told,  
To be a cause of scandal—that you should avoid.



94.

Not rudely pointing with your finger,  
But rather with a reverent gesture showing  
With the whole right hand outstretched—  
This is how to indicate the road.

95.

Do not wave your arms with uncouth gestures.  
Express yourself instead with unobtrusive signs,  
With gentle sounds and finger snaps.<sup>69</sup>  
For acting otherwise is impolite excess.

96.

Lie down to sleep in the preferred direction,  
In the posture of the Buddha when he passed into nirvāṇa.  
And first with vigilance decide  
That you'll be quick to rise again.

97.

The actions of the Bodhisattva  
Are unbounded, so the Teachings say.  
Of these, until the goal is won,  
Embrace the practices that purify your mind.

98.

Reciting thrice by day and thrice by night,  
*The Sūtra in Three Sections*,<sup>70</sup>  
Relying on the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas,  
Purify the rest of your transgressions.

99.

Wherever and whenever and whatever you are doing,  
For your sake or the sake of others,  
Implement with diligence  
The teachings given for that situation.

100.

There is indeed no field of knowledge  
That the Buddhas' offspring should not learn.  
For those who are well-versed in all these ways,  
There is no action destitute of merit.

101.

Directly, then, or indirectly,  
Do nothing that is not for others' sake.  
And solely for their welfare dedicate  
Your every action to the gaining of enlightenment.

102.

Never, at the cost of life or limb,  
Forsake your virtuous friend, your teacher,

Learned in the doctrine of the Mahāyāna,  
Supreme in Bodhisattva discipline.

103.

Learn how to attend upon your guru  
As described in Shrī Sambhava's life.<sup>71</sup>  
This and other teachings of the Buddha  
You should understand by reading in the sūtras.

104.

Indeed within these sūtras all the practices are found;  
Therefore read and study them.  
*The Sūtra of the Essence of the Sky*<sup>72</sup>  
Is the text that should be studied first.

105.

All that must be practiced constantly  
Is clearly and extensively explained  
Within the *Digest of All Disciplines*,<sup>73</sup>  
So this is something you should read repeatedly.

106.

From time to time, for sake of brevity,  
Consult the *Digest of the Sūtras*.<sup>74</sup>  
And those two works peruse with diligence  
That noble Nāgārjuna has composed.

107.

Whatever in these works is not proscribed  
Be sure to undertake and implement.  
And what you find enjoined there, perfectly fulfill,  
And so protect the minds of worldly beings.

108.

Examining again and yet again  
The state and actions of your body and your mind—  
This alone defines in brief  
The maintenance of watchful introspection.

109.

But all this must be acted out in truth,  
For what is to be gained by mouthing syllables?  
What invalid was ever helped  
By merely reading in the doctor's treatises?

## 6. Patience

1.

All the good works gathered in a thousand ages,  
Such as deeds of generosity,  
And offerings to the Blissful Ones—  
A single flash of anger shatters them.

2.

No evil is there similar to anger,  
No austerity to be compared with patience.  
Steep yourself, therefore, in patience,  
In various ways, insistently.

3.

Those tormented by the pain of anger,  
Never know tranquillity of mind—  
Strangers they will be to every pleasure;  
They will neither sleep nor feel secure.

4.

Even those dependent on their lord  
For gracious gifts of honors and of wealth  
Will rise against and slay  
A master who is filled with wrath and hate.

5.

His family and friends he grieves,  
And is not served by those his gifts attract.  
No one is there, all in all,  
Who, being angry, lives at ease.

6.

All these ills are brought about by wrath,  
Our sorrow-bearing enemy.  
But those who seize and crush their anger down  
Will find their joy in this and future lives.

7.

Getting what I do not want,  
And all that hinders my desire—  
In discontent my anger finds its fuel.  
From this it grows and beats me down.

8.

Therefore I will utterly destroy  
The sustenance of this my enemy,  
My foe who has no other purpose  
But to hurt and injure me.

9.  
So come what may, I'll not upset  
My cheerful happiness of mind.  
Dejection never brings me what I want;  
My virtue will be warped and marred by it.

10.  
If there's a remedy when trouble strikes,  
What reason is there for dejection?  
And if there is no help for it,  
What use is there in being glum?

11.  
Pain, humiliation, insults, or rebukes—  
We do not want them  
Either for ourselves or those we love.  
For those we do not like, it's the reverse!

12.  
The cause of happiness is rare,  
And many are the seeds of suffering!  
But if I have no pain, I'll never long for freedom;  
Therefore, O my mind, be steadfast!

13.  
The Karna folk and those devoted to the Goddess,<sup>75</sup>  
Endure the meaningless austerities  
Of being cut and burned.  
So why am I so timid on the path of freedom?

14.  
There's nothing that does not grow light  
Through habit and familiarity.  
Putting up with little cares  
I'll train myself to bear with great adversity!

15.  
Don't I see that this is so with common irritations:  
Bites and stings of snakes and flies,  
Experiences of hunger and of thirst,  
And painful rashes on my skin?

16.  
Heat and cold, the wind and rain,  
Sickness, prison, beatings—  
I'll not fret about such things.  
To do so only aggravates my trouble.

17.  
There are some whose bravery increases,  
At the sight of their own blood,

While some lose all their strength and faint  
When it's another's blood they see!

18.  
This results from how the mind is set,  
In steadfastness or cowardice.  
And so I'll scorn all injury,  
And hardships I will disregard!

19.  
When sorrows fall upon the wise,  
Their minds should be serene and undisturbed.  
For in their war against defiled emotion,  
Many are the hardships, as in every battle.

20.  
Thinking scorn of every pain,  
And vanquishing such foes as hatred:  
These are exploits of victorious warriors.  
The rest is slaying what is dead already!

21.  
Suffering also has its worth.  
Through sorrow, pride is driven out  
And pity felt for those who wander in saṃsāra;  
Evil is avoided; goodness seems delightful.

22.  
I am not angry with my bile and other humors—  
Fertile source of suffering and pain!  
So why should living beings give offence,  
They likewise are impelled by circumstance?<sup>76</sup>

23.  
Although they are unlooked for, undesired,  
These ills afflict us all the same.  
And likewise, though unwanted and unsought,  
Defilements nonetheless insistently arise.

24.  
Never thinking, "Now I will be angry,"  
People are impulsively caught up in anger.  
Irritation, likewise, comes  
Though never plans to be experienced!

25.  
All defilements of whatever kind,  
The whole variety of evil deeds  
Are brought about by circumstances:  
None is independent, none autonomous.

26.

Conditions, once assembled, have no thought  
That they will now give rise to some result.  
Nor does that which is engendered  
Think that it has been produced.

27.

The primal substance, as they say,  
And that which has been called the self,  
Do not arise designedly,  
And do not think, "I will become."

28.

For that which is not born does not exist,  
So what could want to come to be?  
And permanently drawn toward its object,  
It can never cease from being so.<sup>77</sup>

29.

Indeed! This self, if permanent,  
Is certainly inert like space itself.  
And should it meet with other factors,  
How could they affect it, since it is unchanging?

30.

If, when conditions act on it, it stays just as it was before,  
What influence have these conditions had?  
They say that these are agents of the self,  
But what connection could there be between them?<sup>78</sup>

31.

All things, then, depend on other things,  
And these likewise depend; they are not independent.  
Knowing this, we will not be annoyed  
At things that are like magical appearances.

32.

"Resistance," you may say, "is out of place,  
For what will be opposed by whom?"  
The stream of sorrow is cut through by patience;  
There is nothing out of place in our assertion!

33.

Thus, when enemies or friends  
Are seen to act improperly,  
Remain serene and call to mind  
That everything arises from conditions.

34.

If things could be according to their wish,  
No suffering would ever come

To anyone of all embodied beings,  
For none of them wants pain of any kind.

35.

Yet carelessly, all unaware,  
They tear themselves on thorns;  
And ardent in pursuit of wives and goods,  
They starve themselves of nourishment.

36.

Some hang themselves or leap into the void,  
Take poison or consume unhealthy food,  
Or by their evil conduct  
Bring destruction on themselves.

37.

For when affliction seizes them,  
They even slay themselves, the selves they love so much.  
So how can they not be the cause  
Of others' bodily distress?

38.

Although we almost never feel compassion  
For those who, through defilement,  
Bring about their own perdition,  
What purpose does our anger serve?

39.

If those who are like wanton children  
Are by nature prone to injure others,  
There's no reason for our rage;  
It's like resenting fire for being hot.

40.

And if their faults are fleeting and contingent,  
If living beings are by nature mild,  
It's likewise senseless to resent them—  
As well be angry at the sky when it is full of smoke!

41.

Although it is their sticks that hurt me,  
I am angry at the ones who wield them, striking me.  
But they in turn are driven by their hatred;  
Therefore with their hatred I should take offence.

42.

In just the same way in the past  
I it was who injured living beings.  
Therefore it is right that injury  
Should come to me their torturer.

43.

Their weapons and my body—  
Both are causes of my torment!  
They their weapons, I my body brandished;  
Who then is more worthy of my rage?

44.

This body—running sore in human form—  
Merely touched, it cannot stand the pain!  
I'm the one who grasped it in my blind attachment,  
Whom should I resent when pain occurs?

45.

We who are like children  
Shrink from pain, but love its causes.  
We hurt ourselves through our misdeeds!  
So why should others be the object of our rage?

46.

And who indeed should I be angry with?  
This pain is all my own contriving—  
Likewise all the janitors of hell  
And all the groves of razor trees!<sup>79</sup>

47.

Those who harm me rise against me—  
It's my karma that has summoned them.  
And if through this these beings go to hell,  
Is it not I who bring their ruin?

48.

Because of them, and through my patience,  
All my many sins are cleansed and purified.  
But they will be the ones who, thanks to me,  
Will have the long-drawn agonies of hell.

49.

Therefore I am *their* tormentor!  
Therefore it is *they* who bring me benefit!  
Thus with what perversity, pernicious mind,  
Will you be angry with your enemies?

50.

If a patient quality of mind is mine,  
I shall avoid the pains of hell.  
But though indeed I save myself,  
What of my foes, what fate's in store for them?

51.

If I repay them harm for harm,  
Indeed they'll not be saved thereby.



My conduct will in turn be marred,  
Austerity of patience brought to nothing.

52.

Because the mind is bodiless  
It cannot be destroyed by anyone.  
Because of mind's attachment to the body,  
This body is oppressed by pain.

53.

Scorn and hostile words,  
And comments that I do not like to hear—  
My body is not harmed by them.  
What reason do you have, O mind, for your resentment?

54.

The enmity that others show me,  
Since in this or future lives  
It cannot actually devour me,  
Why should I be so averse to it?

55.

Perhaps I turn from it because  
It hinders me from having what I want.  
But all my property I'll leave behind,  
While sins will keep me steady company.

56.

Better far for me to die today,  
Than live a long and evil life.  
However long the days of those like me,  
The pain of dying will be all the same.

57.

One man dreams he lives a hundred years  
Of happiness, but then he wakes.  
Another dreams an instant's joy,  
But then he likewise wakes.

58.

And when they wake, the happiness of both  
Is finished, never to return.  
Likewise, when the hour of death comes round,  
Our lives are over, whether brief or long.

59.

Though we be rich in worldly goods,  
Delighting in our wealth for many years,  
Despoiled and stripped as though by thieves,  
We must go naked and with empty hands.

60.

Perhaps we'll claim that by our wealth we live,  
And living, gather merit, dissipating evil.  
But if we are aggressive for the sake of profit,  
Won't our gains be evil, all our merits lost?

61.

And if the aim for which we live  
Is thereby wasted and undone,  
What use is there in living thus,  
When evil is the only consequence?

62.

And if, when people slander us,  
We claim our anger is because they injure others,  
How is it we do not resent  
Their slander when it's aimed at someone else?

63.

And if we bear with this antipathy  
Because it's due to other factors,  
Why are we impatient when they slander *us*?  
Defilement, after all, has been the cause of it.

64.

Even those who vilify and undermine  
The Sacred Doctrine, images, and stūpas  
Are not proper objects of our anger.  
Buddhas are themselves untouched thereby.

65.

And even if our teachers, relatives, and friends  
Are now the object of aggression,  
All derives from factors, as we have explained.  
This we should perceive and curb our wrath.

66.

Beings suffer injury alike  
From lifeless things as well as living beings.  
So why be angry only with the latter?  
Rather let us simply bear with harm.

67.

Some do evil things because of ignorance,  
Some respond with anger, being ignorant.  
Which of them is faultless in such acts?  
To whom shall error be ascribed?

68.

Instead, why did they act in times gone by  
That they are now so harmed at others' hands?

Since everything depends on karma,  
Why should I be angry at such things?

69.

This I see and therefore, come what may,  
I'll hold fast to the virtuous path  
And foster in the hearts of all  
An attitude of mutual love.

70.

Now when a building is ablaze  
And flames leap out from house to house,  
The wise course is to take and fling away  
The straw and anything that spreads the fire.

71.

And so, in fear that merit might be all consumed,  
We should at once cast far away  
Our mind's attachments:  
Tinder for the fiery flames of hate.

72.

Is it not a happy chance if when, condemned to death,  
A man is freed, his hand cut off in ransom for his life?  
And is it not a happy chance if now, to escape hell,  
I suffer only the misfortunes of the human state?

73.

If even these, my present pains,  
Are now beyond my strength to bear,  
Why do I not cast off my anger,  
Cause of future sorrows in infernal torment?

74.

For sake of gaining all that I desired,  
A thousand times I underwent  
The tortures of the realms of hell—  
Achieving nothing for myself and others.

75.

The present aches are nothing to compare with those,  
And yet great benefits will come from them.  
These troubles that dispel the pain of wanderers—  
It's only right that I rejoice in them.

76.

When others take delight  
In giving praise to those endowed with talents,  
Why, O mind, do you not find  
A joy likewise in praising them?

77.

The pleasure that is gained therefrom  
Itself gives rise to blameless happiness.  
It's urged on us by all the holy ones,  
And is the perfect way of winning others.

78.

"But they're the ones who'll have the happiness," you say.  
If this then is a joy you would resent,  
Abandon paying wages and returning favors.  
You will be the loser—both in this life and the next!

79.

When praise is heaped upon your qualities,  
You're keen that others should be pleased thereby.  
But when the compliment is paid to others,  
You feel no inclination to rejoice as well.

80.

You who want the happiness of beings  
Have wished to be enlightened for their sake.  
So why should others irk you when  
They find some pleasure for themselves?

81.

And if you claim to wish that beings  
Be enlightened, honored by the triple world,  
When petty marks of favor come their way,  
Why are you so discomforted?

82.

When dependents who rely on you,  
To whom you are obliged to give support,  
Find for themselves the means of livelihood,  
Will you not be happy, will you once again be angry?

83.

If even this you do not want for beings,  
How could you want Buddhahood for them?  
And how can anyone have bodhichitta  
Who is angry when another prospers?

84.

If someone else receives a gift,  
Or if that gift stays in the benefactor's house,  
In neither case will it be yours—  
So, given or withheld, why is it your concern?

85.

All your merit and the faith of others,  
All your sterling qualities—why throw them all away?

Not holding onto what might bring you riches,  
Tell me, why are you not angry at yourself?

86.

Not only do you feel no sorrow  
For the evils you have done,  
You even wish to match yourself  
With those whose merit has been earned!

87.

If unhappiness befalls your enemies,  
Why should this be cause for your rejoicing?  
The wishes of your mind alone,  
Will not in fact contrive their injury.

88.

And if your hostile wishes *were* to bring them harm,  
Again, what cause of joy is that to you?  
“Why, then I would be satisfied!”—are these your thoughts?  
Is anything more ruinous than that?

89.

Caught upon the hook, unbearable and sharp,  
Cast by the fisherman, my own defilements,  
I’ll be flung into the cauldrons of the pit,  
And surely boiled by all the janitors of hell!

90.

Veneration, praise, and fame  
Serve not to increase merit or my span of life,  
Bestowing neither health nor strength  
And nothing for the body’s ease.

91.

If I am wise in what is good for me,  
I’ll ask what benefit these bring.  
For if it’s entertainment I desire,  
I might as well resort to alcohol and cards!<sup>80</sup>

92.

I lose my life, my wealth I squander,  
All for reputation’s sake.  
What use are words, and whom will they delight  
When I am dead and in my grave?

93.

Children can’t help crying when  
Their sand castles come crumbling down.  
My mind is so like them  
When praise and reputation start to fail.

94.

Short-lived sound, devoid of intellect,  
Can never in itself intend to praise me.  
I say that it's the joy that others take in me,  
It's this that is the cause of my delight.

95.

But what is it to me if others take delight  
In someone else, or even in myself?  
Their pleasure's theirs and theirs alone.  
No part of it is felt by me.

96.

If I am happy at the joy of those who take delight,  
Then everyone should be a source of joy to me.  
When people take delight in others  
Why am I not happy at their pleasure?

97.

The satisfaction that is mine  
From thinking, "I am being praised,"  
Is unacceptable to common sense  
And nothing but the antics of a silly child.

98.

Praise and compliments distract me,  
Sapping my revulsion with saṃsāra.  
I start to envy others their good qualities  
And thus all excellence is ruined.

99.

Those who stay close by me, then,  
To damage my good name and cut me down to size—  
Are surely there protecting me  
From falling into realms of grief.

100.

For I am one who strives for freedom.  
I must not be caught by wealth and honors.  
How could I be angry with the ones  
Who work to free me from my fetters?

101.

They, like Buddha's very blessing,  
Bar my way, determined as I am  
To plunge myself headlong in sorrow:  
How can I be angry with them?

102.

I should not be irritated, saying,  
"They are obstacles to my good deeds."

For is not patience the supreme austerity,  
And should I not abide by this?

103.  
And if I fail to practice patience,  
Hindered by my own shortcomings,  
I myself create impediments  
To merit's causes, yet so close at hand.

104.  
If something does not come to be when something else is absent,  
And does arise, that factor being present,  
That factor is indeed its cause.  
How can it, then, be said to hinder it?

105.  
The beggars who arrive at proper times  
Are not an obstacle to generosity.  
We cannot say that those who give the vows  
Are hindrances to ordination!

106.  
The beggars in this world are numerous;  
Assailants are comparatively few.  
For if I do no harm to others,  
Others do no injury to me.

107.  
So, like a treasure found at home,  
That I have gained without fatigue,  
My enemies are helpers in my Bodhisattva work  
And therefore they should be a joy to me.

108.  
Since I have grown in patience  
Thanks to them,  
To them its first fruits I should give,  
For of my patience they have been the cause.

109.  
And if I say my foes should not be honored  
Since they did not mean to stimulate my patience,  
Why do I revere the Sacred Dharma,  
Cause indeed of my attainment?

110.  
"These enemies conspired to harm me," I protest,  
"And therefore should receive no honors."  
But had they worked to help me like a doctor,  
How could I have brought forth patience?

111.

Thanks to those whose minds are full of malice  
I engender patience in myself.  
They therefore are the causes of my patience,  
Fit for veneration, like the Dharma.

112.

And so the mighty Sage has spoken of the field of beings  
As well as of the field of Conquerors.  
Many who brought happiness to beings,  
Have passed beyond, attaining to perfection.

113.

Thus the state of Buddhahood depends  
On beings and on Buddhas equally.  
What kind of practice is it then  
That honors only Buddhas but not beings?

114.

Not in the qualities of their minds  
But in the fruits they give are they alike.  
In beings, too, such excellence resides,  
And therefore beings and Buddhas are the same.

115.

Offerings made to those with loving minds  
Reveal the eminence of living beings.<sup>81</sup>  
Merit that accrues from faith in Buddha  
Shows in turn the Buddha's eminence.

116.

Although not one of them is equal  
To the Buddhas, who are oceans of perfection,  
Because they have a share in bringing forth enlightenment,  
Beings may be likened to the Buddhas.

117.

If of such a gathering of supreme excellence  
A tiny part appeared in certain beings,  
The three worlds made in offering to them  
Would be a very little thing.

118.

Since there lies in beings a share  
In bringing forth the supreme and enlightened state,  
By virtue of this parity alone  
It's right that I should reverence them.

119.

The Buddhas are my true, unfailing friends.  
Boundless are the benefits they bring to me.



How else may I repay their goodness  
But by making living beings happy?

120.

By helping beings we repay the ones  
Who sacrifice their lives for us and plunge into the hell of Unrelenting Pain.  
Should beings therefore do great harm to me,  
I'll strive to bring them only benefit.

121.

For those who have become my lords,  
At times, took care not even of their bodies.  
Why should I, a fool, behave with such conceit?  
Why should I *not* become the slave of others?

122.

Buddhas are made happy by the joy of beings.  
They sorrow, they lament when beings suffer.  
By bringing joy to beings, then, I please the Buddhas also;  
By wounding them, I wound the Buddhas too.

123.

Just as there's no sensual delight  
To please the mind of one whose body burns in fire,  
There is no way to please the great compassionate ones  
While we ourselves are causes of another's pain.

124.

The damage I have done to beings  
Saddens all the Buddhas in their great compassion.  
Therefore, all these evils I confess today  
And pray that they will bear with my offences.

125.

That I might rejoice the Buddhas' hearts,  
Henceforth I will be master of myself, the servant of the world.  
I shall not seek revenge though crowds may trample on my head or kill me.  
Let the Guardians of the world rejoice!

126.

The great compassionate lords consider as themselves<sup>82</sup>  
All beings—there's no doubt of this.  
Those whom I perceive as beings are Buddhas in themselves;  
How can I not treat them with respect?

127.

This very thing is pleasing to the Buddhas' hearts  
And perfectly secures the welfare of myself.  
This will drive away the sorrows of the world,  
And therefore it will be my constant work.

128.

Imagine that the steward of a king  
Does injury to multitudes of people.  
Those with clear, farseeing eyes  
Do not respond with violence even if they can.

129.

For stewards, after all, are not alone.  
They are supported by the kingly power.  
Therefore I will not despise  
The feeble beings tormenting me.

130.

Their allies are the guardians of hell  
And also the compassionate Buddhas.  
Therefore living beings I will gratify  
As subjects might placate a wrathful king.

131.

And yet, the pains of hell to be endured  
Through making living beings suffer—  
Could these ever be unleashed on me  
By all the ire of such a king?

132.

And even if that king were pleased,  
Enlightenment he could not give to me.  
For this will only be achieved  
By bringing happiness to beings.

133.

No need to mention future Buddhahood,  
Achieved through bringing happiness to beings.  
How can I not see that glory, fame, and pleasure  
Even in this life will likewise come?

134.

For patience in saṃsāra brings such things  
As beauty, health, and good renown.  
Its fruit is great longevity,  
The vast contentment of a universal king.

## 7. Diligence

1.

Thus with patience I will strive with diligence.  
For in such diligence enlightenment is found.  
If no wind blows, then nothing stirs,  
And neither is there merit without diligence.

2.

Diligence means joy in virtuous ways.<sup>83</sup>  
Its contraries have been defined as laziness,  
An inclination for unwholesomeness,  
Defeatism and self-contempt.

3.

A taste for idle pleasure  
And a craving for repose and sleep,  
No qualms about the sorrows of saṃsāra:  
Laziness indeed is born from these.

4.

Snared by the trapper of defiled emotion,  
Enmeshed and taken in the toils of birth,  
Again you've strayed into the maw of Death.  
What is it? Have you still not understood?

5.

Don't you see how, one by one,  
Death has come for all your kind?  
And yet you slumber on so soundly,  
Like a buffalo beside its butcher.

6.

All the paths of flight are blocked,  
The Lord of Death now has you in his sights.  
How can you take such pleasure in your food,  
And how can you delight to rest and sleep?<sup>84</sup>

7.

Death will swoop on you so swiftly.  
Gather merit till that moment comes!  
For even if you then throw off your indolence,  
What will you do when there is no more time?

8.

"This I have not done, and this I'm only starting.  
And this—I'm only halfway through . . ."  
*Then* is the sudden coming of the Lord of Death,  
And oh, the thought "Alas, I'm finished!"

9.  
You'll look upon the faces of your hopeless friends,  
Their tearstained cheeks, their red and swollen eyes  
(For such will be the depths of their distress),  
And then you'll see the heralds of the Deadly Lord.

10.  
The memory of former sins will torture you,  
The screams and din of hell break on your ears.  
With very terror you will foul yourself.  
What will you do in such delirium?

11.  
If, like a living fish that twists and writhes,  
You are so terrified while still alive,  
What need to speak of pain unbearable  
In hells created by past evil deeds?

12.  
How can you remain at ease like this  
When you have done the deeds that lead  
To contact on your tender baby-flesh  
Of boiling liquids in the hell of Extreme Heat?

13.  
So testy and thin-skinned, you want results without endeavor—  
Many are the troubles now in store for you!  
Though in the grip of death, you are behaving like a god,<sup>85</sup>  
And suffering, alas, will beat you down!

14.  
So take advantage of this human boat.  
Free yourself from sorrow's mighty stream!  
This vessel will be later hard to find.  
The time that you have now, you fool, is not for sleep!

15.  
You turn your back upon the Sacred Doctrine,  
Supreme joy and boundless source of bliss.  
Why delight in mere excitement,  
In distractions that will cause you misery?

16.  
Do not be downcast, but marshal all your powers;  
Make an effort; be the master of yourself!  
Practice the equality of self and other;  
Practice the exchange of self and other.<sup>86</sup>

17.  
“Oh, but how could I become enlightened?”  
Don't excuse yourself with such despondency!

The Buddha, who declares the truth,  
Has truly spoken and proclaimed

18.  
That if they bring forth strength of perseverance,  
Even bees and flies  
And gnats and grubs will gain  
Supreme enlightenment so hard to find.

19.  
And if, by birth and lineage of human kind,  
I'm able to distinguish good from ill  
And do not leave aside the Bodhisattva deeds,  
Why should I not attain the state of Buddhahood?

20.  
“That I must give away my life and limbs  
Alarms and frightens me”—if so you say,  
Your terror is misplaced. Confused,  
You fail to see what's hard and what is easy.

21.  
For myriads of ages, measureless, uncounted,  
Your body has been cut, impaled,  
Burned, torn—for times past numbering!  
Yet none of this has brought you Buddhahood.

22.  
The hardships suffered on the path to Buddhahood  
Are limited in their extent  
And likened to the pain of an incision  
Made to cure the harms of inward ills.

23.  
And all our doctors cure disease  
By means of bitter remedies.  
Likewise, to destroy a vast amount of pain,  
We should be patient with our little hurts.

24.  
And yet the Supreme Healer does not use,  
Like them, these common remedies.  
With ways of extreme tenderness  
He soothes away intense and boundless suffering.

25.  
Our guide instructs us to begin  
By giving vegetable greens or other little things,  
That later, step-by-step, the habit once acquired,  
We may be able to donate our very flesh.

26.

For when we truly feel  
Our bodies are no different from the given herbs,  
What hardship can there be  
In giving up, relinquishing, our very flesh?

27.

Sin has been abandoned, thus there is no pain;  
Through having wisdom there is no more sorrow.  
For so it is that mind and body both  
Are injured by false views and sinfulness.

28.

Merit is the true cause of the body's ease,  
While happiness of mind is had through understanding.  
What can sadden those who have compassion,  
Who remain within saṃsāra for the sake of beings?

29.

For through their power of bodhichitta,  
Former sins are totally consumed,  
And merit, ocean-vast, is gathered in,  
It's therefore said that they excel the Shrāvakas.<sup>87</sup>

30.

Mounted on the horse of bodhichitta,  
Which puts to flight all mournful weariness,  
What lucid person could be in despair  
Proceeding in this way from joy to joy?

31.

The forces that secure the good of beings,  
Are aspiration, steadfastness, relinquishment, and joy.  
Aspiration grows through fear of suffering  
And contemplation of the benefits to be attained.

32.

Therefore leaving everything that is adverse to it,  
I'll labor to increase my diligence,  
Through aspiration and self-confidence, relinquishment and joy,  
By strength of earnest application and exertion of control.

33.

The boundless evils of myself and others—  
I must bring them all to nothing,  
Even though a single of these ills  
May take unnumbered ages to exhaust!

34.

And if I find within myself  
No sign that faults are even starting to be cleansed,

Why does my heart not burst asunder,  
Destined as I am for boundless pain?

35.

Good qualities for my and others' sake,  
Though they be many, I must now accomplish,  
Even though for each of them  
I must endeavor for unnumbered ages.

36.

Acquaintance I have never gained  
With even part of such great qualities.  
It is indeed amazing that I render meaningless  
This life that somehow I have gained.

37.

Offerings to the Buddhas I have never made;  
No feasts were ever held through my donations;  
No works have I accomplished for the Teachings;  
The wishes of the poor I left unsatisfied.

38.

I have not saved the frightened from their fear;  
The wretched I have not consoled.  
My mother's pain, her womb's discomfort:  
These alone are my accomplishments.

39.

My failure to aspire to Dharma  
Now and in the past  
Has brought me to my present dereliction.  
Who therefore would spurn such aspiration?

40.

Aspiration, so the Sage asserted,  
Is the root of every kind of virtue.  
Aspiration's root in turn  
Is constant meditation on the fruits of action.

41.

The body's pains, anxieties of mind,  
And all my fears of various kinds,  
To be deprived of what I want—  
Such is the harvest of my sinful deeds.

42.

But if my acts are good, sincerely intended,  
Then no matter where I turn my steps,  
The merit gained will honor me  
With its resulting benefits.

43.

But if, through seeking happiness, my deeds are wrong,  
No matter where I turn my steps,  
The knives of misery will cut me down,  
The wage and retribution of a sinful life.

44.

Through virtue I will rest within the cool heart of a fragrant spreading lotus,  
With splendor nurtured by the sweet words of the Conqueror.  
Then from the lotus opened in the Sage's light, in supreme form I will arise  
To dwell, the blissful Buddha's heir, in presence of Victorious Ones.<sup>88</sup>

45.

Or else as wages of my many sins, my skin completely flayed,  
I shall be utterly brought low  
By creatures of the Lord of Death, who on my body pour a liquid bronze all  
melted in the dreadful blaze.  
And pierced by burning swords and knives, my flesh  
Dismembered in a hundred parts will fall upon the white-hot iron ground.

46.

Therefore I will aspire and tend to virtue,  
And steep myself in it with great devotion.  
And with the method stated in the *Vajradhvaja*,<sup>89</sup>  
I will train in confident assurance.

47.

Let me first consider my reserves—  
To start or not to start accordingly.  
It might be better not to start,  
But once begun, I should not then withdraw.

48.

For if I do such things, the pattern will return  
In later lives, and sin and pain will grow.  
And other actions will be left undone  
Or else will bear a meager fruit.

49.

Action, the afflictions, and ability:  
Three things to which my pride should be directed.<sup>90</sup>  
“I will do this, I myself, alone!”  
These words define my pride of action.

50.

Overpowered by their minds' afflictions,  
Worldly folk are helpless to secure their happiness.  
Compared with those who wander, I am able!  
This therefore shall be my task.



51.

When others give themselves to low behavior,  
What shall be my stance in their regard?  
In any case, I'll not be arrogant;  
My best way is to give up such conceit.

52.

When they find a dying serpent,  
Even crows behave like soaring eagles.  
Therefore if I'm weak and feeble-hearted,  
Even little faults will strike and injure me.<sup>91</sup>

53.

But if, depressed, I give up trying,  
How can I gain freedom from my abject state?  
But if I stand my ground with proud resolve,  
It will be hard for even great faults to attack me.

54.

Therefore with a steadfast heart  
I'll get the better of my weaknesses.  
But if my failings get the upper hand,  
My wish to overcome the triple world is laughable indeed.

55.

"I *will* be victor over all,  
And nothing shall prevail and bring me down!"  
The offspring of the Lion, the Conqueror,  
Should constantly abide in this self-confidence.<sup>92</sup>

56.

Those whom arrogance destroys  
Are thus defiled; they lack self-confidence.  
Those who have true confidence escape the foe,  
While others fall into the power of an evil pride.

57.

When arrogance inflates the mind,  
It draws it down to states of misery—  
Or ruins happiness, should human birth be gained.  
Thus one is born a slave, dependent for one's sustenance,

58.

Or feeble-minded, ugly, without strength,  
The butt and laughingstock of everyone.  
These "ascetics" puffed up with conceit!  
If these you call the proud, then tell me who are wretched?

59.

Those who uphold pride to vanquish pride, the enemy,  
Are truly proud, victorious, and brave.

And they who stem the increase of that evil pride,  
Perfect, according to their wish, the fruit of victory for beings.

60.

When I am beleaguered by defilements,  
I will stand and face them in a thousand ways.  
I'll not surrender to the host of the afflictions  
But like a lion I will stand amid a crowd of foxes.

61.

However great may be their peril,  
People will by reflex guard their eyes.  
And likewise I, whatever dangers come,  
Must not fall down beneath defilement's power.

62.

Better for me to be burned to death,  
And better to be killed, my head cut off!  
At no time will I bow and scrape  
Before that foe of mine, defiled emotion.<sup>93</sup>

62a.

Thus in every time and place  
I will not wander from the wholesome path.

63.

Like those who take great pleasure in their games,  
Whatever task the Bodhisattvas do,  
Let them devote themselves without reserve,  
With joyfulness that never knows satiety.

64.

People labor hard to gain contentment  
Though success is very far from sure.  
But how can they be happy if they do not do  
Those deeds that are the source of joy to them?

65.

And since they never have enough of pleasure,  
Honey on the razor's edge,  
How could they have enough of merit,  
Fruits of which are happiness and peace?

66.

The elephant, tormented by the noonday sun,  
Will dive into the waters of a lake,  
And likewise I must plunge into my work  
That I might bring it to completion.

67.

If impaired by weakness or fatigue,  
I'll lay the work aside, the better to resume.  
And I will leave the task when it's complete,  
All avid for the work that's next to come.

68.

As seasoned fighters face the swords  
Of enemies upon the battle line,  
I'll lightly dodge the weapons of defilement,  
And strike my enemy upon the quick.

69.

If, in the fray, the soldier drops his sword,  
In fright, he swiftly takes it up again.  
So likewise, if the arm of mindfulness is lost,  
In fear of hell, I'll quickly get it back!

70.

Just as poison fills the body,  
Borne on the current of the blood,  
Likewise evil, when it finds its chance,  
Will spread and permeate the mind.

71.

I will be like a frightened man, a brimming oil-jar in his hand,  
And menaced by a swordsman saying,  
"Spill one drop and you shall die!"  
This is how practitioners should hold themselves.

72.

Just as a man would swiftly stand  
If in his lap a serpent were to glide,  
If sleep and lethargy beset me,  
I will speedily repulse them.

73.

Every time, then, that I fail,  
I will reprove and chide myself,  
Thinking long that by whatever means  
Such faults in future shall no more occur.

74.

At all times and in any situation,  
How can I make mindfulness my constant habit?  
Thinking thus I will desire  
To meet with teachers and fulfill the proper tasks.

75.

By all means, then, before I start some work,  
That I might have the strength sufficient to the task,

I will recall the teachings upon carefulness  
And lightly rise to what is to be done.

76.

Just as flaxen threads waft to and fro,  
Impelled by every breath of wind,  
So all I do will be achieved,  
Controlled by movements of a joyful heart.

## 8. Meditative Concentration

1.  
Cultivating diligence as just described,  
In concentration I will place my mind.  
For those whose minds are slack and wandering  
Are caught between the fangs of the afflictions.

2.  
In solitude, the mind and body  
Are not troubled by distraction.  
Therefore leave this worldly life  
And totally abandon mental wandering.

3.  
Because of loved ones and desire for gain,  
We fail to turn away from worldly things.  
These, then, are the first things to renounce.  
The prudent should conduct themselves like this.

4.  
Penetrative insight joined with calm abiding  
Utterly eradicates afflicted states.  
Knowing this, first search for calm abiding,  
Found by people who are happy to be free from worldly ties.

5.  
Beings, brief, ephemeral,  
Who strongly cling to what is also transient,  
Will catch no glimpse of those they love  
For many thousands of their future lives.

6.  
Not seeing them, their minds will have no joy,  
They therefore will not rest in equanimity.  
But even if they see them, they are not content—  
And as before, the pain of longing stays.

7.  
If I crave for other beings,  
A veil is cast upon the perfect truth.  
Wholesome disillusion<sup>94</sup> melts away,  
And finally there comes the sting of pain.

8.  
My thoughts are all for them,  
And thus my life is frittered by.  
My family and friends all change and pass, for whom  
The changeless Dharma is cast out.

9.  
For if I act like childish beings,  
Sure it is that I shall fall to evil destinies.  
So why do I keep company with infants,  
Who lead me to a state so far from virtue?

10.  
One moment friends,  
The next, they're bitter enemies.  
Even pleasant things arouse their discontent:  
Ordinary people—it is hard to please them!

11.  
A beneficial word and they resent it,  
Turning me instead from what is good.  
And when I close my ears to what they say,  
Their anger makes them fall to lower states.

12.  
Jealous of superiors, they vie with equals,  
Proud to those below, they strut when praised.  
Say something untoward, they seethe with rage.  
What good was ever had from childish folk?

13.  
Keep company with them and what will follow?  
Self-aggrandizement and scorn for others,  
Talk about the “good things” of saṃsāra—  
Every kind of vice is sure to come.

14.  
Only ruin can result  
From such a link between myself and others.  
For they will bring no benefit to me,  
And I in turn can do them nothing good.

15.  
Therefore flee the company of childish people.  
Greet them, when you meet, with smiles  
That keep on terms of common courtesy,  
Without inviting intimate relations.

16.  
Like bees that get their honey from the flowers,  
Take only what will serve the practice of the Dharma.  
Treat everyone like new acquaintances  
And keep yourself from close familiarity.

17.  
“Oh I am rich and well respected;  
Lots of people take delight in me.”

Nourish such complacency and later,  
After death, your fears will start!

18.  
Indeed, O foolish and afflicted mind,  
You want and crave for all and everything.  
All this together will rise up  
As pain itself, increased a thousandfold.

19.  
Since this is so, the wise have no attachments;  
From such cravings fear and anguish come.  
And fix this firmly in your understanding:  
All that may be wished for will by nature fade to nothing.

20.  
For people may have gained great wealth of riches,  
Enjoying reputation, sweet renown.  
But who can say where they have gone to now,  
With all the baggage of their gold and fame?

21.  
Why should I be pleased when people praise me?  
Others there will be who scorn and criticize—  
And why despondent when I'm blamed,  
Since there'll be others who think well of me?

22.  
So many are the leanings and the wants of beings  
That even Buddha could not please them all—  
Of such a wretch as me no need to speak!  
I'll give up such concerns with worldly things.

23.  
People scorn the poor who have no wealth,  
They also criticize the rich who have it.  
What pleasure can derive from keeping company  
With people such as these, so difficult to please?

24.  
In kindness childish beings take no delight  
Unless their own desires are satisfied.  
A childish person, thus, is no true friend.  
This the Tathāgatas have declared.

25.  
In woodlands, haunt of stag and bird,  
Among the trees where no dissension jars,  
It's there I would keep pleasant company!  
When might I be off to make my dwelling there?

26.

When shall I depart to make my home  
In cave or empty shrine or under spreading tree,  
With, in my breast, a free, unfettered heart,  
Which never turns to cast a backward glance?

27.

When might I abide in such a place,  
A place unclaimed and ownerless,  
That's wide and unconfined, a place where I might stay  
At liberty, without attachment?

28.

When might I be free of fear,  
Without the need to hide from anyone,  
With just a begging bowl and few belongings,  
Dressed in garments coveted by none?

29.

And going to the charnel ground,  
When shall I compare  
My body with the dry bones there,  
So soon to fall to nothing, all alike?

30.

This form of mine, this very flesh  
Is soon to give out such a stench  
That even jackals won't come close—  
And that indeed is all it will become.

31.

This body, now so whole and integral,  
This flesh and bone that life has knit together,  
Will drift apart, disintegrate,  
And how much more will friend depart from friend?

32.

Alone we're born, alone we come into the world,  
And when we die, alone we pass away.  
No one shares our fate, and none our suffering.  
What need have I of "friends" who hinder me?

33.

Like those who journey on the road,  
Who pause and lodge along the way,  
Beings on the pathways of existence  
Seize upon the lodging of their birth.

34.

Until the time comes round  
When four men carry me away,



Amid the grief of worldly folk—  
Till then, I will away and go into the forest.

35.

There, with no befriending or begrudging,  
I will stay alone in solitude,  
Considered from the outset as already dead,  
Thus, when I die, a source of pain to none.

36.

Then there will be no one standing by  
In tears and mourning, thus to trouble me.  
And no one will be there distracting me  
From thinking of the Buddha and the practice.

37.

Therefore in these lovely gleaming woods,  
With joy that's marred by few concerns,  
Where mental wandering will cease,  
I will remain in blissful solitude.

38.

Relinquishing all other aspirations,  
Focusing myself on one intent alone,  
I'll strive to still my mind  
And, calming it, to bring it to subjection.

39.

In this and in the worlds to come,  
Desire's the parent of all woe:  
In this world, killing, bonds, and wounds,  
And in the next, the hells and other pains.

40.

You send your go-betweens, both boy and maid,<sup>95</sup>  
With many invitations for the prize,  
Avoiding, in the quest, no sin,  
No deed that brings an ill renown,

41.

Nor acts of frightful risk,  
Nor loss and ruin of possessions—  
All for pleasure and the perfect bliss,  
That utmost penetrating kiss

42.

Of what in truth is nothing but a heap of bones  
Devoid of self, without autonomy!  
Is this the only object of desire and lust?  
Sooner pass beyond all suffering and grief!

43.

What pains you went to just to lift her face,  
Her face that modestly looked down,  
Which, looked upon or not before,  
Was always with a veil concealed.

44.

That face for which you languished so . . .  
Well, here it is, now nakedly exposed.  
The vultures have uncovered it for you to see.  
What's this? You run away so soon?

45.

That which once you jealously protected,  
Shielded from the eyes of other men,  
Why, miser that you are, don't you protect it,  
Now that it's the food of graveyard birds?

46.

Look, this mass of human flesh,  
Is now the fare of carrion beasts—  
And you would deck with garlands, sandalwood, and jewels,  
The food and provender of others?

47.

Look again, this heap of bones—  
Inert and dead. Why, what are you so scared of?  
Why did you not fear it when it walked around,  
Just like a risen corpse propelled by some strange influence?

48.

You loved it once, when clothed and draped it was.  
Well, now it's naked, why do you not want it?  
Ah, you say, your need is no more there,  
But why did you embrace it, all bedecked and covered?

49.

From food, a single source, come equally  
The body's filth and nectar of the mouth.  
So why are you delighted by saliva,  
And yet repelled by excrement?

50.

Taking no delight in pillows  
Made of cotton soft to touch,  
You claim the human form emits no stench.  
Befooled by lust, its filth you do not recognize!

51.

Lustful one, befuddled by desire,  
Because you cannot copulate with it,

You angrily find fault with cotton,  
Soft though it may be to touch!

52.

And if you have no love of filth,  
How can you coddle on your lap  
A cage of bones tied fast with sinews,  
Plastered over with the mud of flesh?

53.

In fact you're full of filth yourself;  
You wallow in it constantly.  
It is indeed just filth that you desire,  
And therefore long for other sacks of it!

54.

"But it's the skin and flesh I love  
To touch and look upon."  
Then why do you not wish for flesh alone,  
Inanimate and in its natural state?

55.

The mind that you perhaps desire,  
You cannot hold or look upon.  
Whatever you can hold or see is not the mind—  
Why copulate with something it is not?

56.

To fail to grasp the unclean nature  
Of another's flesh is not perhaps so strange.  
But not to see the filthy nature  
Of oneself is very strange indeed!

57.

Why does the mind, intent on filthiness,  
Neglect the fresh young lotus blossom,  
Opened in the sunlight of a cloudless sky,  
To take joy rather in a sack of dirt?

58.

And since you're disinclined to touch  
A place or object grimed with excrement,  
Why do you wish to touch the body  
Whence such excrement has come?

59.

And if you have no craving for impurity,  
Why will you now embrace and kiss  
What comes from such an unclean place,  
Engendered likewise from an unclean seed?<sup>96</sup>

60.

The tiny fetid worms that come from filth—  
You have no love of them.  
And yet you're lusting for a human form,  
From filth arisen and replete with it.

61.

Toward your own impurity  
Disgust you do not feel;  
And yearning and athirst for filth,  
You long for other sacks of it!

62.

Pleasant substances like camphor,  
Rice, and fresh green herbs—  
Put them in your mouth and spit them out:  
The earth itself is fouled thereby!

63.

If still you doubt such filthiness,  
Though it is very plain for all to see,  
Go off into the charnel grounds;  
Observe the fetid bodies there abandoned.

64.

When their skins are peeled away,  
You feel great horror and revulsion.  
Now that you have understood,  
How can you still take joy in such a thing?

65.

The scent that now perfumes the skin  
Is sandalwood and nothing else.  
Yet how is it that one thing's fragrance  
Causes you to long for something else?

66.

Is it not best to have no lust  
For something that by nature stinks?  
The worldly crave beside their purpose—  
Why do they anoint their flesh with pleasant scents?

67.

For if this scent is sandalwood,  
How can it be the perfume of the body?  
How is it that the fragrance of a thing  
Induces you to crave for something else?

68.

With lanky hair, with long nails overgrown,  
With dirty teeth all reeking with the stink of slime,

This body, naked, as it is, untended—  
Is indeed a horror to behold!

69.

Why go to such excess to clean and polish  
What is but a weapon that will injure you?  
The cares that people squander on themselves in ignorance  
Convulse the universe with madness.

70.

When you saw the heaps of human bones,  
You felt revulsion in the charnel ground.  
And will you take delight in cities of the dead  
Frequented by such skeletons that live and move?

71.

What's more, possession of another's filth  
Is not to be acquired free of charge.  
All is at a price: exhaustion in this life,  
And in the next, the suffering of hell!

72.

To gather riches young boys are unable,  
And what can they enjoy when they're full grown?  
The whole of life is spent in gaining wealth,  
But then they're old—too old to satisfy their lust!

73.

Some are wretched in their great desire,  
But worn out by their daylong work,  
They go home broken by fatigue  
To sleep the slumbers of a corpse.

74.

Some, wearied by their travels far from home,  
Must suffer separation from their wives  
And children whom they love and long to see.  
They do not meet with them for years on end.

75.

Some, ambitious for prosperity,  
Not knowing how to get it, sell themselves.  
Happiness eludes their grasp and pointlessly  
They live and labor for their masters.

76.

Some sell themselves, no longer free,  
In bondage, slavery to others.  
And, destitute, their wives give birth  
With only trees for shelter, in the wild.

77.

Fools deceived by craving for a livelihood  
Decide that they will make their fortune  
In the wars, though fearful for their lives.  
And seeking gain, it's slavery they get.

78.

Some, as the result of craving,  
Have their bodies slashed, impaled on pointed stakes.  
Some are wounded, run through by the lance,  
While some are put to death by fire.

79.

The pain of gaining, keeping, and of losing all!  
See the endless hardships brought on us by property!  
For those distracted by their love of wealth  
There is no chance for freedom from the sorrows of existence.

80.

They indeed, possessed of many wants,  
Will suffer many troubles, all for very little:  
They're like the ox that pulls the cart  
And catches bits of grass along the way.

81.

For sake of such a paltry thing,  
Which is not rare, which even beasts can find,  
Tormented by their karma, they destroy  
This precious human life so hard to find.

82.

All that we desire is sure to perish,  
On which account we fall to hellish pain.  
For what amounts to very little  
We must suffer constant and exhausting weariness.

83.

With but a millionth part of such vexation  
Enlightenment itself could be attained!  
Those who crave are plagued far more than those engaged upon the path,  
Yet Buddhahood is not what they attain!

84.

Reflect upon the pains of hell and other evil states!  
Weapons, fires, and poisons,  
Yawning chasms, hostile foes—  
None is on a level with our cravings.

85.

So, revolted by our lust and wanting,  
Let us now rejoice in solitude,

In places empty of all conflict and defilement:  
The peace and stillness of the forest.

86.

Happy those intent on others' good,  
Who roam in pleasant places formed of massive stone,  
Refreshed by moonlight's sandal-scented beams,  
By gentle woodland breezes soothed!

87.

In caves, beneath the trees, in houses left abandoned,  
May we linger long as we might wish.  
Relinquishing the pain of guarding our possessions,  
Let us live in freedom, unconfined by cares.

88.

To have such liberty unmarred by craving,  
Loosed from every bond and tie—  
A life of such contentment and such pleasure,  
Even Indra would be pressed to find!

89.

Reflecting in such ways as these  
Upon the excellence of solitude,  
Pacify completely all discursiveness  
And cultivate the mind of bodhichitta.

90.

Strive at first to meditate  
Upon the sameness of yourself and others.<sup>97</sup>  
In joy and sorrow all are equal;  
Thus be guardian of all, as of yourself.

91.

The hand and other limbs are many and distinct,  
But all are one—the body to be kept and guarded.  
Likewise, different beings, in their joys and sorrows,  
Are, like me, all one in wanting happiness.

92.

This pain of mine does not afflict  
Or cause discomfort to another's body,  
And yet this pain is hard for me to bear  
Because I cling and take it for my own.

93.

And other beings' pain  
I do not feel, and yet,  
Because I take them for myself,<sup>98</sup>  
Their suffering is mine and therefore hard to bear.

94.

And therefore I'll dispel the pain of others,  
For it is simply pain, just like my own.  
And others I will aid and benefit,  
For they are living beings, like my body.

95.

Since I and other beings both,  
In wanting happiness, are equal and alike,  
What difference is there to distinguish us,  
That I should strive to have my bliss alone?

96.

Since I and other beings both,  
In fleeing suffering, are equal and alike,  
What difference is there to distinguish us,  
That I should save myself and not the others?

97.

Since the pain of others does no harm to me,  
I do not shield myself from it.  
So why to guard against "my" future pain,  
Which does no harm to this, my present "me"?

98.

To think that "I will have to bear it"  
Is in fact a false idea.  
For that which dies is one thing;  
What is born is something else.

99.

"It's for the sufferers themselves," you'll say,  
"To shield themselves from injuries that come!"  
The pain felt in my foot is not my hand's,  
So why, in fact, should one protect the other?

100.

"True, it's inadmissible," you'll say,  
"It happens simply through the force of ego-clinging."  
But what is inadmissible for others and myself  
Should be discarded utterly!

101.

Continua and gatherings, so-called,  
Like garlands and like armies, are unreal.  
So there is no one to experience pain  
For who is there to be its "owner"?

102.

Suffering has no "possessor,"  
Therefore no distinctions can be made in it.



Since pain is pain, it is to be dispelled.  
What use is there in drawing boundaries?

103.

“But why dispel the pains of all?”  
You cannot argue in this way!  
If “my” pain is removed, so too should that of “others.”  
If theirs is not, then neither should be mine.

104.

“Compassion makes us feel such pain,” you say,  
“So why should we make efforts to engender it?”  
But thinking of the sufferings of beings,  
How can you regard as great the smart of your compassion?

105.

And if through such a single pain  
A multitude of sorrows can be cured,  
Such pain as this all loving people  
Strive to foster in themselves and others.

106.

Thus Supuṣhpachandra,<sup>99</sup>  
Knowing that the king would cause him harm,  
Did nothing to escape from tribulation,  
That the pains of many should be ended.

107.

Those whose minds are practiced in this way,  
Whose joy it is to soothe another’s ills,  
Will venture into hell of Unrelenting Pain  
As swans sweep down upon a lotus lake.

108.

The ocean-like immensity of joy  
Arising when all beings will be freed,  
Will this not be enough? Will this not satisfy?  
The wish for my own freedom, what is that to me?

109.

The work of bringing benefit to beings  
Will not, then, make me proud and self-admiring.  
The happiness of others is itself my satisfaction;  
I do not expect another recompense.

110.

Therefore just as I defend myself  
From even slight disparagement,  
In just the same way with regard to others,  
I should likewise have a mind protective and compassionate.

111.  
The drop of sperm and blood<sup>100</sup> belonged to others.  
Yet, through strong habituation,  
I came to have in its regard a sense of “I,”  
Though, in itself, it is devoid of entity.

112.  
And so, why not identify  
Another’s body, calling it my “I”?  
And vice versa, why should it be hard  
To think of this my body as another’s?

113.  
Perceiving now the faults possessed by “I,”  
The ocean of good qualities that are in “other,”  
I shall lay aside all love of self  
And gain the habit of adopting other beings.

114.  
Just as hands and other limbs  
Are thought of as the members of a body,  
Can we likewise not consider others  
As the limbs and members of a living whole?

115.  
Just as in connection with this form, devoid of self,  
My sense of “I” arose through strong habituation,  
Why should not the thought of “I,”  
Through habit, not arise related to another?

116.  
Thus when I work for others’ sake,  
There’ll be no sense of boasting self-congratulation.  
It is just as when I feed myself—  
I don’t expect to be rewarded!

117.  
Therefore just as I defend myself  
From even slight disparagement,  
Likewise for beings I shall now grow used  
To have a mind protective and compassionate.

118.  
This is why the Lord Avalokita  
Out of great compassion blessed his name,  
That those caught in the midst of multitudes  
Might be released and freed from every fear.<sup>101</sup>

119.  
And so we should be undeterred by hardships,  
For through the influence of use and habit,

People even come to grieve  
For those whose very names struck terror in their hearts!

120.  
Those desiring speedily to be  
A refuge for themselves and others  
Should make the interchange of “I” and “other,”  
And thus embrace a sacred mystery.

121.  
Because of our attachment to our bodies,  
Even little things alarm us.  
This body, then, this source of so much terror—  
Who would not detest it as the worst of foes?

122.  
Wishing to relieve our bodies’ ills,  
Our hungry mouths, the dryness of our throats,  
We steal the lives of fishes, birds, and deer  
And lie in wait along the road.

123.  
And for the sake of profit and position  
Some there are who even kill their parents,  
Or steal what has been offered to the Triple Gem,  
Because of which, they’ll burn in hell of Unrelenting Pain.

124.  
Where are the wise and prudent then  
Who cherish, guard, and serve the body?  
Who would not perceive it as their foe,  
And as their foe, regard it with contempt?

125.  
“If I give this, what will be left for me?”  
Thinking of oneself—the way of evil ghosts.  
“If I keep this, what will be left to give?”  
Concern for others is the way of heaven.<sup>102</sup>

126.  
If to serve myself I harm another,  
I’ll suffer later in the realms of hell.  
But if for others’ sake I harm myself,  
Then every excellence will be my heritage.

127.  
Wanting what is best for me—  
Stupidity, inferiority, and lower realms result!  
Let this be changed, applied to others—  
Honors and the realms of bliss will come!

128.

Enslaving others, forcing them to serve me,  
I will come to know the state of servitude.  
But if I labor for the good of others,  
Mastery and leadership will come to me.

129.

All the joy the world contains  
Has come through wishing happiness for others.  
All the misery the world contains  
Has come through wanting pleasure for oneself.

130.

Is there need for lengthy explanation?  
Childish beings look out for themselves;  
Buddhas labor for the good of others:  
See the difference that divides them!

131.

If I do not interchange  
My happiness for others' pain,  
Enlightenment will never be attained,  
And even in saṃsāra, joy will fly from me.

132.

Leaving future lives outside the reckoning,  
Even this life's needs are not fulfilled:  
The servants do not do their work,  
And masters do not pay the wages earned.

133.

Casting far away abundant joys  
That may be gained in this or future lives,  
Because of bringing harm to other beings,  
I ignorantly bring myself intolerable pain.

134.

All the harm with which this world is rife,  
All fear and suffering that there is,  
Clinging to the "I" has caused it!  
What am I to do with this great demon?

135.

If this "I" is not relinquished wholly,  
Sorrow likewise cannot be avoided.  
If they do not keep away from fire,  
People can't escape from being burned.

136.

To free myself from harm  
And others from their sufferings,

Let me give myself to others,  
Loving them as I now love myself.

137.  
“For I am now beneath the rule of others,”  
Of this you must be certain, O my mind.  
And now no longer shall you have a thought  
That does not wish the benefit of beings.

138.  
My sight and other senses, now the property of others—  
To use them for myself would be improper.  
And it is likewise disallowed  
To use my faculties against their owners!

139.  
Thus sentient beings will be my chief concern.  
And everything I see my body has  
Will all be seized and offered  
For the use and service of all other beings.

140.  
Take others—lower, higher, equal—as yourself,<sup>103</sup>  
Identify yourself as “other.”  
Then, without another thought,  
Immerse yourself in envy, pride, and rivalry.

141.  
He’s the center of attention. I am nothing.  
And, unlike him, I’m poor without possessions.  
Everyone looks up to him, despising me,  
All goes well for him; for me there’s only bitterness!

142.  
All I have is sweat and drudgery,  
While he’s there, sitting at his ease.  
He’s great, respected in the world,  
While I’m the underdog, a well-known nobody.

143.  
What! A nobody without distinction?  
Not true! I do have some good qualities.  
Compared with some, he’s lower down.  
Compared with some, I do excel!

144.  
My discipline, my understanding have declined,  
But I am helpless, ruled by my defilements.  
As much as he is able, he should cure me.  
I will be submissive even to his punishments.

145.

The fact is he does nothing of the sort!  
By what right, then, does he belittle me?  
What use, then, are his qualities to me—  
Those qualities of which he's so possessed?

146.

Indifferent to the plight of living beings,  
Who tread the brink of evil destinies,  
He makes an outward show of virtues,  
And even wants to vie with sages.

147.

That I might excel, outstripping him—  
Him, regarded as my peer and equal!  
In contests I will certainly secure  
My fame and fortune, public renown.

148.

By every means I'll advertise  
My gifts to all the world,  
Ensuring that *his* qualities  
Remain unknown, ignored by everyone.

149.

My faults I will conceal, dissimulate.  
For I, not he, will be the object of devotion;  
I, not he, will gain possessions and renown,  
I will be the center of attention.

150.

I will take such satisfaction  
In his evil deeds and degradation.  
I will render him despicable,  
The butt and laughingstock of everyone.

151.

People say this pitiful nonentity  
Is trying to compete with me!  
But how can he be on a par  
With *me*, in learning, beauty, wealth, or pedigree?

152.

Just to hear them talk about my excellence,  
My reputation on the lips of all,  
The thrill of it sends shivers down my spine,  
A pleasure that I bask and revel in!

153.

Even if he does have something,  
I'm the one he's working for!

He can keep enough just to survive,  
But with my strength I'll steal the rest away.

154.  
I will wear his happiness away;  
I will always hurt and injure him.  
He's the one who in saṃsāra  
Did me mischiefs by the hundred!

155.  
Countless ages, O my mind,  
You spent, desiring to attain your aims.  
And what great weariness it was,  
While your reward was only misery!

156.  
And therefore now most certainly  
Apply yourself completely to the good of others.  
The Buddha did not lie in what he said—  
You'll see the benefits that come from it.

157.  
If indeed, you had in former times  
Embraced this work and undertaken it,  
You could not still be lacking  
In the perfect bliss of Buddhahood.

158.  
Therefore, just as you identify  
A drop of others' blood and sperm,  
And cling to it as though it were yourself,  
Now take sentient beings—others—as your self.

159.  
Now for others you should spy  
On everything your body seems to have.  
Steal it, take it all away,  
And use it for the benefit of others.

160.  
I indeed am happy, others sad;  
I am high and mighty, others low;  
I am helped while others are abandoned:  
Why am I not jealous of myself?

161.  
Happiness, fulfillment: these I give away.  
The pain of others: this I will embrace.  
Inquiring of myself repeatedly  
I will thus investigate my faults.

162.

When others are at fault, I'll take  
And turn the blame upon myself,  
And all my sins, however slight,  
Declare, and make them known to many.

163.

The fame of others I will magnify  
That it might thus outshine my own.  
Among them I will be as one who serves,  
My lowly labor for their benefit.

164.

This ego is by nature rife with faults,  
Its accidental gifts I should not praise.  
Whatever qualities it has I'll so contrive  
That they remain unknown to everyone.

165.

All the harm, in short, that ego does  
To its advantage and to others' cost,  
May all of it descend upon itself,  
To its own hurt—to others' benefit.

166.

Do not let it strut about the place,  
So arrogant, so overbearing.  
But like a newly wedded bride,  
Let it be demure and blushing, timorous and shy!

167.

"Do this!" "Be like that!" "Such things don't ever do!"  
It's thus that you will bring it forcibly to heel.  
And if it oversteps the mark,  
Well then, apply the lash!

168.

And so, O mind, if still you will refuse,  
Though you have been so lengthily advised,  
Since every evil has its roots in you,  
You are indeed now ripe for punishment!

169.

The time when you could do me harm  
Is in the past and now is here no more.  
Now I see you! Where will you escape?  
I'll bring you down with all your haughty insolence.

170.

Let every thought of working for yourself  
Be utterly rejected, cast aside!



Now that you've been sold to others,  
Stop your whining, be of service!

171.  
For if, through being inattentive,  
I do not deliver you to others,  
You will hand me over, it is certain,  
To the guards and janitors of hell.

172.  
For this is how so many times  
You have betrayed me, and how long I've suffered!  
Now my memory is full of rancor,  
I will crush your selfish schemes!

173.  
And so it is that if I want contentment,  
I should never seek to please myself.  
And likewise, if I wish to guard myself,  
Of others I should always be the guard.

174.  
To the extent this human form  
Is cosseted and saved from hurt,  
Just so, just so, to that degree,  
It dwindles to a weak and fretful state.

175.  
For those who sink to such a pass,  
The earth and all it holds  
Are powerless to satisfy.  
For who can give them all they crave?

176.  
Their hopeless craving brings them misery,  
And evil schemes invade their minds,  
While those with free, untrammelled hearts,  
Will never know an end of excellence.

177.  
Therefore for the increase of my body's wants,  
I'll give no space, no opportunity.  
And of possessions, those things are the best  
That do not captivate by their attractiveness.

178.  
Dust and ashes are the body's final state—  
This body which, inert, is moved by other forces.  
This form so frightening and foul—  
Why do I so regard it as my "self"?

179.

Alive or dead what difference does it make?  
What use is this machine to me?  
What difference will divide it from a clod of earth?  
Alas that I don't rid myself of pride!

180.

Through lavishing attention on this body,  
Such sorrow have I brought myself so senselessly.  
What use is all my wanting, all my hating,  
For what indeed is like a log of wood?

181.

Whether I protect and pamper it,  
Or whether it is eaten up by carrion birds,  
This body feels no pleasure, no aversion.  
Why then do I cherish it so much?

182.

Resentment when it is reviled,  
Or pleasure when it is esteemed,  
Neither of these two my body feels.  
So why do I exhaust myself?

183.

If I say I do it since it's loved by other people,  
Others whom I thus regard as friends,  
Since all appreciate the bodies that they have,  
Why do I not take pleasure in them too?<sup>104</sup>

184.

Therefore, free from all attachment,  
I will give this body for the benefit of beings.  
And though it is afflicted by so many faults,  
I shall adopt it as my necessary tool.

185.

And so, enough of all my childish ways.  
I'll follow in the footsteps of the wise;  
Recalling their advice on carefulness,  
I'll shun all sleep and mental dullness.

186.

Like the Buddhas' heirs, in their compassion,  
I will bear with all that should be borne.  
For if I do not labor night and day,  
When will my sorrows reach their end?<sup>105</sup>

187.

Thus to banish all obscuring veils  
I'll bend my mind from the mistaken path;

And constantly upon the perfect object  
I shall rest my mind in even meditation.

## 9. [Wisdom](#)

1.

All these branches of the Doctrine  
The Enlightened Sage expounded for the sake of wisdom.<sup>[106](#)</sup>  
Therefore they must cultivate this wisdom  
Who wish to have an end of suffering.

2.

Relative and ultimate,  
These the two truths are declared to be.  
The ultimate is not within the reach of intellect,  
For intellect is said to be the relative.<sup>[107](#)</sup>

3.

In light of this, within the world, two kinds of people are observed:  
Those with yogic insight and the common run of people.  
In this regard, the views of ordinary folk  
Are undermined by yogis who themselves are in the world<sup>[108](#)</sup>

4.

(Within whose ranks  
The lower, in degrees of insight, are confuted by the higher)  
By means of the examples that the yogis and the worldly both accept.  
And for the sake of the result, analysis is left aside.

5.

When ordinary folk perceive phenomena,  
They look on them as real, and not illusory.  
This, then, is the subject of debate  
Where ordinary and yogis differ.

6.

Forms and so forth, which we all perceive,  
Exist by general acclaim but not by valid reasoning.  
They're false just like, for instance, unclean things  
Regarded in the common view as pure.

7.

But that he might instruct the worldly,  
Our Protector spoke of "things."  
But these in truth lack even momentariness.  
Now if you say it's wrong to claim the momentary as relative,

8.

There is no fault. For momentariness  
Is relative for yogis, but for worldly beings, ultimate.  
Were it otherwise, the common view  
Could fault the yogic insight into corporal impurity.

9.

“Through a Buddha, who is but illusion, how does merit spring?”  
As if the Buddha were existing truly.  
“But,” you ask, “if beings are like illusions,  
How, when dying, can they take rebirth?”

10.

As long as the conditions are assembled,  
Illusions, likewise, will persist and manifest.  
Why, through simply being more protracted,  
Should sentient beings be regarded as more real?

11.

If one kills or harms the magical illusion of a man,  
There is no mind in such a thing and therefore there’s no sin.  
But beings do indeed have mirage-like minds;  
Sin and merit will, in consequence, arise.

12.

There is no power in things like spells,  
So mirage-like minds do not occur through them.  
Illusions spring from various causes;  
Thus illusions are of different kinds.

13.

A single cause for everything  
There never was!  
“If ultimately, beings are in nirvāṇa,” you will say,  
“But relatively circle in saṃsāra,

14.

“Even Buddhahood reverts to the saṃsāric state.  
So why,” you ask, “pursue the Bodhisattva path?”  
As long as there’s no cutting of the causal stream,  
There is no halting even of illusory displays.

15.

But when the causal stream is severed,  
Even relative phenomena do not appear.  
“If even that which is deceived does not exist,  
What is it,” you will ask, “that sees illusion?”

16.

But if, for you, these same illusions have no being,  
What, indeed, is there to be perceived?  
“But objects have another mode of being,” you will say,  
“That very mode is but the mind itself.”

17.

But if the mirage is the mind itself,  
What is then perceived by what?

The Guardian of the World himself has said  
That mind cannot be seen by mind.

18.  
In just the same way, he has said,  
The sword's edge cannot cut the sword.  
"But," you say, "it's like the flame  
That perfectly illuminates itself."

19.  
The flame, in fact, can never light itself.  
And why? Because the darkness never dims it!  
"The blueness of a thing by nature blue," you say,  
"Depends, unlike a crystal, upon nothing else."

20.  
"Likewise some perceptions  
Come from other things, while some do not."  
But something that's by nature blue has never of itself imposed  
A blueness on its non-blue self.

21.  
The phrase "The lamp illuminates itself"  
The mind can know and formulate.  
But what is there to know and say  
That "mind is self-illuminating?"

22.  
The mind, indeed, is never seen by anything.  
And therefore, whether it can know, or cannot know, itself,  
Is like the beauty of a barren woman's daughter:  
Something that it's pointless to discuss.

23.  
"But if," you ask, "the mind is not self-knowing,  
How does it remember what it knew?"  
We say that, like the poison of the water rat,  
It's through the link with things experienced that memory occurs.

24.  
"In certain cases," you will say, "the mind  
Can see the minds of others, how then not itself?"  
But through the application of a magic balm,  
The eye may see the treasure, but the salve it does not see.

25.  
It's not indeed our purpose to disprove  
Experiences of sight or sound or knowing.  
Our aim is here to undermine the cause of sorrow:  
The thought that such phenomena have true existence.

26.

“Illusions are not other than the mind,” you say,  
And yet you don’t consider them the same.  
How could they not be different if the mind is real?  
And how can mind be real if you deny a difference?

27.

Although it is unreal, a mirage can be seen;  
And that which sees is just the same.  
“But saṃsāra must be based on something real,” you say,  
“Or else it is like empty space.”

28.

But how could the unreal be causally effective,  
Even if it rests on something real?  
This mind of yours is isolated and alone,  
Alone, in solitude, and unaccompanied.

29.

If the mind indeed is free of objects,  
All beings must be Buddhas, Thus-Gone and enlightened.  
And so, what purpose can there be  
In saying thus, that there is “Only Mind”?

30.

“Even if we know that all is like illusion,  
How,” you ask, “will this dispel afflictive passion?  
Magicians may indeed themselves desire  
The mirage-women they themselves create.”

31.

The reason is they have not rid themselves  
Of habits of desiring objects of perception;  
And when they gaze upon such things,  
Their aptitude for emptiness is weak indeed.

32.

By training in this aptitude for emptiness,  
The habit to perceive real things will be relinquished.  
By training in the thought “There isn’t anything,”  
This view itself will also be abandoned.

33.

“There is nothing”—when this is asserted,  
No *thing* is there to be examined.  
How can a “nothing,” wholly unsupported,  
Rest before the mind as something present?

34.

When something and its nonexistence  
Both are absent from before the mind,

No other option does the latter have:  
It comes to perfect rest, from concepts free.

35.

As the wishing jewel and tree of miracles  
Fulfill and satisfy all hopes and wishes,  
Likewise, through their prayers for those who might be trained,  
The physical appearance of the Conquerors occurs.

36.

The healing shrine of the *garuḍa*,  
Even when its builder was long dead,  
Continued even ages thence  
To remedy and soothe all plagues and venom.

37.

Likewise having gained the “shrine of victory”  
In accordance with their deeds for sake of Buddhahood,  
Though Bodhisattvas pass beyond all grief,  
They yet can satisfy all ends.

38.

“But how,” you ask, “can offerings made  
To beings freed from all discursiveness give fruit?”  
It’s said that whether Buddhas live or pass beyond,  
The offerings made to them are equal in their merit.

39.

Whether you assert them in the ultimate or relative,  
Merit, so the scriptures say, arises,  
Just as there will be results  
When Buddhas are considered truly real.

40.

“We’re free,” you say, “through seeing the (Four) Truths—  
What use is it to us, this view of emptiness?”  
But as the scriptures have themselves proclaimed,  
Without this path there can be no enlightenment.

41.

You say the Mahāyāna has no certainty.  
But how do you substantiate your own tradition?  
“Because it is accepted by both parties,” you will say.  
But at the outset, you yourself lacked proof!

42.

The reasons why you trust in your tradition  
May likewise be applied to Mahāyāna.  
Moreover, if accord between two parties shows the truth,  
The Vedas and the rest are also true.



43.

“Mahāyāna is at fault,” you say, “because it is contested.”  
But Buddhist texts are questioned by extremists,  
While Buddhists also vie among themselves;  
And so your own tradition you must now abandon.

44.

The true monk is the root of Dharma,  
And to be a monk is difficult indeed.  
It’s hard for minds enmeshed in thoughts  
To pass beyond the bonds of suffering.

45.

You say there’s liberation in the instant  
That defilements are entirely forsaken.  
Yet those who from defilements are set free  
Continue to display the influence of karma.

46.

“Only for a while,” you say. “For it is certain  
That the causes of rebirth, their cravings, are no more.”  
They have no craving, granted, through defilement,  
But like their ignorance, why should they not have craving undefiled?

47.

This craving is produced by virtue of sensation,  
And sensation, this they surely have.  
Concepts linger still within their minds;  
And it is to these concepts that they cling.

48.

The mind that has not realized voidness,  
May be halted, but will once again arise,  
Just as from a non-perceptual absorption.  
Therefore one must train in emptiness.

49.

If all the words recorded in the sūtras  
You admit to be the Buddha’s perfect speech,  
Why don’t you now accept the greater part of Mahāyāna,  
With which your sūtras are in perfect harmony?<sup>109</sup>

50.

If due to just a single jarring element,  
The whole is held to be at fault,  
Why should a single sūtra in agreement with your texts  
Not vindicate the rest as Buddha’s teaching?

51.

Mahākāshyapa<sup>110</sup> himself and others  
Could not sound the depths of such a teaching.

Who will therefore say that they're to be rejected  
Just because they are not grasped by *you*?

52.

To linger and abide within saṃsāra,  
Freed from every craving and from every fear,  
In order to achieve the good of those who ignorantly suffer:  
Such is the fruit that emptiness will bear.

53.

Therefore it is incorrect  
To find fault with this view of emptiness.  
And so, with every doubt abandoned,  
We should meditate on it!

54.

Afflictive passion and the veil upon cognition—  
The cure for their obscurity is emptiness.  
How then shall they not meditate on this  
Who wish for swift attainment of omniscience?

55.

Whatever is the source of suffering,  
Let that be the object of our fear.  
But voidness will allay our every grief,  
How could it be for us a thing of dread?

56.

If such a thing as "I" exists indeed,  
Then terrors, granted, will torment it.  
But since no self or "I" exists at all,  
What is there left for fears to terrify?

57.

The teeth, the hair, the nails are not the "I,"  
And "I" is not the bones or blood,  
The mucus from the nose and phlegm are not the "I,"  
And neither is it made of lymph or pus.

58.

The "I" is not the body's grease or sweat,  
The lungs and liver likewise do not constitute it.  
Neither are the inner organs "I,"  
Nor yet the body's excrement and waste.

59.

The flesh and skin are not the "I,"  
And neither are the body's warmth and breath.  
The cavities within the frame are not the "I,"  
And "I" is not accounted for in sixfold consciousness.

60.

If the hearing consciousness is permanent,  
It follows that it's hearing all the time.  
And if there is no object, what does it cognize?  
On what grounds do you call it consciousness?

61.

If something that's unconscious knows,  
It follows that a stick has knowledge also.  
Therefore in the absence of a thing to know,  
It's clear that consciousness will not arise.

62.

If the selfsame consciousness detects a form,  
At that time, why does it not hear?  
Perhaps you say the sound's no longer there.  
Then neither is there consciousness of sound.

63.

How could that which has the nature of a sound-perceiver  
Ever be transformed into a form-perceiver?  
"A single man," you say, "can be both son and father."  
But these are merely names; his nature is not so.

64.

And likewise "pain," "neutrality," and "pleasure"  
Are neither fatherhood nor sonship;  
And we indeed have never yet observed  
A consciousness of form perceiving sound.

65.

"But like an actor," you reply, "it takes a different role and sees."  
If so, this consciousness is not a constant thing.  
And if its later mode is still the first,  
That's identity indeed and never seen before!

66.

"But its different modes," you say, "are quite unreal."  
Its essence therefore you must now describe.  
You say that this is simply knowing.  
It follows that all beings are a single thing.

67.

What has mind and what does not have mind  
Are thus identical, for both are equal in existing.  
If the different kinds of mind are all unreal,  
What common basis can there be for them?

68.

Something destitute of mind, we hold, is not a self.  
For mindlessness means matter, like a vase.

“But,” you say, “the self has consciousness when joined to mind.”  
Then this refutes its nature of unconsciousness.

69.

If the self, moreover, is immutable,  
What change in it could mingling with the mind produce?  
And selfhood we might equally affirm  
Of empty space, inert and destitute of mind.

70.

“If self does not exist,” you say,  
“There is no link connecting actions with results.  
If when the deed is done, the doer is no more,  
Who is there to reap the karmic fruit?”

71.

The bases of the act and fruit are not the same,  
In both a self is without scope for action.  
This is valid both for you and us;  
What point is there, therefore, in our debate?

72.

“A cause coterminous with its result”  
Is something quite impossible to see.  
And only in the context of a single mental stream  
Can it be said that one who acts will later reap the fruit.

73.

The thoughts now passed, and those to come, are not the self;  
They are no more, or are not yet.  
Is then the self the thought which now is born?  
If so, it sinks to nothing when the latter fades.

74.

For instance, we may take banana trees—  
Cutting through the fibers, finding nothing.  
Likewise analytical investigation  
Will find no “I,” no underlying self.

75.

“If beings,” you will say, “have no existence,  
Who will be the object of compassion?”  
Those whom ignorance imputes,  
For whose sake we have pledged ourselves.

76.

“If,” you ask, “there are no beings, who will gain the fruit?”  
It’s true! It is through ignorance that they are said to be!  
But for the total vanquishing of sorrow,  
The goal, which ignorance conceives, should not be spurned.

77.

The source of sorrow is the pride of saying “I,”  
It’s fostered and increased by false belief in self.  
To this you may believe that there is no redress,  
But meditation on no-self will be the supreme way.

78.

What we call the body is not feet or shins;  
The body, likewise, is not thighs or loins.  
It’s not the belly nor indeed the back,  
And from the chest and arms the body is not formed.

79.

The body is not ribs or hands,  
Armpits, shoulders, bowels, or entrails.  
It is not the head, and it is not the throat.  
What is the “body,” then, in all of this?

80.

If the “body” spreads itself  
And with the members coincides,  
Its parts indeed are present in those parts.  
But where does “body,” in itself, abide?

81.

But if the “body,” single and entire  
Is present in the hands and other members,  
However many parts there are, the hands and all the rest,  
You’ll find an equal quantity of “bodies.”

82.

If “body” is not outside or within its parts,  
How is it, then, residing in its members?  
And since it is not other than its parts,  
How can you say that it exists at all?

83.

Thus there is no “body.” It is through illusion,  
With regard to hands and other parts, that “body” as a notion is conceived—  
Just as on account of its specific shape  
A pile of stones is taken for a man.

84.

As long as the conditions are assembled,  
The body will appear to be a man.  
As long as all the parts are likewise present,  
A body will appear therein.

85.

Likewise, since it is a group of fingers,  
The hand itself does not exist as such.

And so it is with fingers, made of joints—  
And joints themselves consist of many parts.

86.

These parts themselves will break down into particles,  
And particles divide according to direction.  
These fragments, too, lack partless parts; they are like space.  
Thus even particles have no existence.

87.

All form, therefore, is like a dream,  
And who will be attached to it, who thus investigates?  
The body, in this way, has no existence;  
What, therefore, is male and what is female?

88.

If suffering itself is truly real,  
Why is joy not altogether quenched thereby?  
If pleasure's real, then why will pleasant tastes  
Not comfort and amuse a man in agony?

89.

If the feeling fails to be experienced,  
Through being overwhelmed by something stronger,  
How can "feeling" rightly be ascribed  
To that which lacks the character of being felt?

90.

Perhaps you say that only subtle pain remains,  
Its grosser form has now been overmastered—  
Or rather it is felt as "mere pleasure."  
But what is subtle still remains itself.

91.

If, because its opposite is present,  
Discomfort fails to manifest,  
Is not the claim that it's a "feeling"  
No more than a mental imputation?

92.

Since so it is, the antidote  
Is meditation and analysis.  
Absorption grown in fields of their investigation  
Is indeed the food and sustenance of yogis.

93.

If between the sense power and a thing  
There is a space, how will the two terms meet?  
And if there is no space, they form a unity,  
And therefore what is it that meets with what?

94.

No penetration can there be of particle by particle,  
For they are both the same in lacking volume.  
But if they do not penetrate, they do not merge;  
And if they do not merge, there's no encounter.

95.

For how could anyone accept  
That what is partless could be said to meet?  
And you must show me, if you ever saw,  
A contact taking place between two partless things.

96.

Consciousness is immaterial,  
And so one cannot speak of contact with it.  
A combination, too, has no reality,  
Just as we have previously shown.

97.

If therefore there's no touch or contact,  
Whence is it that feeling takes its rise?  
What purpose is there, then, in all our toil,  
For what is it, indeed, that torments what?

98.

Since there is no subject for sensation,  
And sensation, too, lacks all existence,  
How is craving not arrested  
When all this is clearly understood?

99.

What we see and what we touch  
Is stuff of dreams and mirages.  
If feeling is coincident with consciousness,  
It follows that it is not seen thereby.

100.

If the one arises first, the other after,  
Memory occurs and not direct sensation.  
Sensation is without perception of itself  
And likewise, by another it is not perceived.

101.

The agent of sensation has no real existence,  
Thus sensation, likewise, has no being.  
What damage, therefore, can sensation do to it—  
This aggregate deprived of self?

102.

The mind within the senses does not dwell,  
It has no place in outer things like form.

And in between, the mind does not abide:  
Not out, not in, not elsewhere, can the mind be found.

103.

It is not in the body, yet is nowhere else.  
It does not merge with it nor stand apart—  
Something such as this does not exist, not even slightly.  
Beings by their nature are beyond the reach of suffering.

104.

If consciousness precedes the cognized object,  
With regard to what does it arise?  
If consciousness arises at the same time as its object,  
Again, regarding what does it arise?

105.

If consciousness comes later than its object,  
Once again, from what does it arise?  
Thus the origin of all phenomena  
Exceeds the reach of understanding.

106.

“If this is so,” you say, “there is no relative,  
And then the two truths—what becomes of them?  
Moreover, if the relative derives from beings’ minds,  
How can they pass beyond their sorrows?”

107.

But that is just the thought of others;  
It is not what *I* mean by the relative.  
If subsequently there are thoughts, the relative’s still there;  
If not, the relative has ceased indeed.

108.

The analyzing mind and what is analyzed  
Are linked together, mutually dependent.  
It is on the basis of conventional consensus  
That all investigation is expressed.

109.

“But when,” you say, “the process of analysis  
Is made, in turn, the object of our scrutiny,  
This investigation likewise may be analyzed,  
And thus we find an infinite regress.”

110.

If phenomena are truly analyzed,  
No basis for analysis remains.  
And when the object is removed, the subject too subsides.  
That indeed is said to be nirvāṇa.



111.

Those who say that both are true,  
Are hard-pressed to maintain their case.  
If consciousness reveals the truth of things,  
On what grounds, in its turn, does consciousness exist?

112.

If knowledge objects show that consciousness exists,  
What is it that shows that *they* exist?  
If both subsist through mutual dependence,  
Both will thereby lose their true existence.

113.

If, without a son, a man cannot be father,  
Whence, indeed, will such a son arise?  
There is no father in the absence of a son.  
Just so, the mind and object have no true existence.

114.

“The plant arises from the seed,” you say,  
“And through it is the seed deduced.  
It’s just the same with consciousness arising from its object.  
How can it fail to show the thing’s existence?”

115.

A consciousness that’s different from the plant itself  
Deduces the existence of the seed.  
But what will show that consciousness exists,  
Whereby the object is itself established?

116.

In everyday perception  
There’s a cause for everything.  
The different segments of the lotus flower  
Arise from a variety of causes.

117.

“But what gives rise,” you ask, “to such variety of causes?”  
An even earlier variety of causes, we declare.  
“And how,” you ask, “do causes give their fruits?”  
Through power, we answer, of preceding causes.

118.

If Īshvara is held to be the cause of beings,  
You must now define for us his nature.  
If, by this, you simply mean the elements,  
No need to tire ourselves disputing names!

119.

Yet earth and other elements are many,  
Impermanent, inert, without divinity.

Trampled underfoot, they are impure,  
And thus they cannot be a God Omnipotent.

120.

The Deity cannot be space—inert and unproductive.  
He cannot be the self, for this we have refuted.  
He's inconceivable, they say—then likewise his creatorship.  
Is there any point, therefore, to such a claim?

121.

What is it that he wishes to create?  
Has he made the self and all the elements?  
But are not self and elements and he himself eternal?  
And consciousness, we know, arises from its object.

122.

Pain and pleasure have, from all time, sprung from karma,  
So tell us, what has his Divinity produced?  
And if there's no beginning in the cause,  
How can there be beginnings in its fruits?

123.

Why are creatures not created constantly,  
For Īshvara relies on nothing but himself?  
And if there's nothing that he has not made,  
What remains on which he might depend?

124.

If Īshvara *depends*, the cause of all  
Is but the meeting of conditions and not Īshvara.  
When these obtain, he cannot but create;  
When these are absent, he is powerless to make.

125.

If Almighty God does not intend,  
But yet creates, another thing has forced him.  
If he wishes to create, he's swayed by his desire.  
So even though Creator, what of his omnipotence?

126.

Those who hold the permanence of particles  
Were indeed refuted earlier.  
The Sāṃkhyas are the ones who hold  
That permanent prakṛiti is the cause of the evolving world.

127.

"Pleasure," "pain," "neutrality," so-called,  
Are qualities which, when they rest  
In equilibrium are termed "prakṛiti."  
The universe arises when this balance is disturbed.

128.

Three natures in a unity are disallowed,  
And thus prakṛiti is without existence.  
These qualities likewise do not exist,  
For each of them indeed is three.

129.

If these qualities have no existence,  
A thing like sound is very far from plausible!  
And cloth and other mindless objects  
Cannot be the seat of feelings such as pleasure.

130.

“But,” you say, “these things possess the nature of their cause.”  
But have we not investigated “things” already?  
For you the cause is “pleasure” and the like,  
And yet from pleasure, cloth has never sprung!

131.

Pleasure, rather, is produced from cloth.  
If this is nonexistent, pleasure likewise.  
As for permanence of pleasure and the rest—  
Well, there’s a thing that’s never been observed!

132.

If pleasure and the rest are manifestly present,  
How comes it that they’re not perceived?  
And if you claim they take on subtle form,  
How is it that they are both gross and subtle?

133.

If coarseness is abandoned, subtlety assumed,  
Subtlety and grossness both lack permanence.  
So why not grant that, in this way,  
All things possess the character of transience?

134.

If the coarser aspect is none other than the pleasure,  
It’s clear that pleasure is itself impermanent.  
If you claim that what does not exist in any sense  
(Because it has no being) cannot manifest,

135.

Although you have denied the birth of things  
That did not previously exist, it’s this that you’re now saying!  
But if results exist within their cause,  
Those who eat their food consume their excrement.

136.

And likewise with the money they would spend on clothing,  
Let them rather buy the cotton grains to wear!

“But,” you say, “the world is ignorant and blind.  
For this is taught by ‘those who know the truth.’”

137.

This knowledge must be present in the worldly too!  
And if they have it, why do they not see?  
If now you say that what the worldly see has no validity,  
This means that what they clearly see is false.

138.

“If,” you ask, “there’s no validity in valid knowledge,  
Is not all that it assesses false?  
And therefore it becomes untenable  
To meditate on voidness, ultimate reality.”

139.

If there is no object for analysis,  
There can be no grasping of its nonexistence.  
And so deceptive objects of whatever kind  
Will also have a nonexistence equally deceptive.

140.

When therefore in one’s dream a child has died,  
The state of mind that thinks it is no more  
Supplants the thought that it is living still.  
And yet both thoughts are equally deceptive.

141.

Therefore, as we see through such investigation,  
Nothing is that does not have a cause;  
And nothing is existent in its causes  
Taken one by one or in the aggregate.

142.

It does not come from somewhere else,  
Neither does it stay nor yet depart.  
How will what confusion takes for truth  
In any sense be different from a mirage?

143.

Things, then, bodied forth by magic spells,  
And that which is displayed by dint of causes—  
Whence have these arisen? we should ask;  
And where they go to, that we should examine!

144.

What is seen when circumstances meet  
And is not seen in absence of the same  
Is not real; it is like an image in a mirror.  
How can true existence be ascribed to it?

145.

What need is there for cause  
In something that's already real?  
But then, what need is there for cause  
In something that does not exist?

146.

Even through a hundred million causes,  
No change takes place in nonexistent things,  
For in that state of "non-thing," how could "things" occur?  
And into what could nonexistent things transform?

147.

Since things cannot become when they are nonexistent,  
When could such existent things occur?  
For insofar as entities do not arise,  
Nonentities themselves will not depart.

148.

And if nonentity is not dispersed,  
No chance is there for entity to manifest.  
And entity cannot be changed into nonentity,  
For otherwise it has a double nature.

149.

Thus there are no entities  
And likewise there's no ceasing of the same.  
And therefore beings, each and every one,  
Are without origin and never cease.

150.

Wandering beings, thus, resemble dreams,  
And also the banana tree, if you examine well.  
In ultimate reality there's no distinguishing  
Between the states of sorrow and beyond all sorrow.

151.

With things that in this way are empty  
What is there to gain and what to lose?  
Who is there to pay me court and honors,  
And who is there to scorn and to revile me?

152.

Pleasure, sorrow—whence do these arise?  
What is there to give me joy and pain?  
And if I search their very suchness,  
Who is craving? What is craved?

153.

Examine now this world of living beings:  
Who is there therein to pass away?

What is there to come, and what has been?  
And who, indeed, are relatives and friends?

154.

May beings like myself discern and grasp  
That all things have the character of space!  
But those who seek their happiness and ease,  
Through disputes or enjoyments,

155.

All are deeply troubled, or else thrilled with joy.  
They suffer, strive, contend among themselves,  
Slashing, stabbing, injuring each other:  
They live their lives engulfed in evil and travail.

156.

From time to time they surface in the states of bliss,  
Abandoning themselves to many pleasures.  
But dying, down they fall to suffer torment,  
Long, unbearable, in realms of sorrow.

157.

Many are the chasms and abysses of existence,  
Where the truth of suchness is not found.  
All is contradiction, all denial;  
Suchness in this world is not like this.

158.

Here, exceeding all description,  
Is the shoreless sea of pain unbearable.  
Here it is that strength is low,  
And lives are flickering and brief.

159.

All activities for sake of life and health,  
Relief of hunger and of weariness,  
Time consumed in sleep, all accident and injury,  
And sterile friendships with the childish—

160.

Thus life passes quickly, meaningless.  
True discernment—hard it is to have!  
How therefore shall we ever find the means  
To curb the futile wanderings of the mind?

161.

Further, evil forces work and strain  
To cast us down into the states of woe;  
Manifold are false, deceptive trails,  
And it is hard to dissipate our doubts.

162.

Hard it is to find again this state of freedom,  
Harder yet to come upon enlightened teachers,  
Hard, indeed, to turn aside the torrent of defilement!  
Alas, our sorrows fall in endless streams!

163.

Alas indeed that living beings,  
Carried on the flood of bitter pain,  
However terrible their plight may be,  
Do not perceive they suffer so!

164.

They are like those who bathe themselves repeatedly  
And then proceed to scorch themselves with fire.  
They suffer greatly in this way,  
Yet there they stay, proclaiming loud their bliss.

165.

Likewise there are some who live and act  
As though old age and death will never come to them.  
But first they're slain and then there comes  
The dreadful fall into the states of loss.

166.

When shall I be able to allay and quench  
The dreadful heat of suffering's blazing fires  
With plenteous rains of my own bliss  
That pour torrential from my clouds of merit?

167.

My wealth of merit gathered in,  
With reverence but without conceptual target,  
When shall I reveal this truth of emptiness  
To those who go to ruin through belief in real existence?

## 10. [Dedication](#)

1.

By all the virtue I have now amassed  
By composition of this book, which speaks  
Of entry to the Bodhisattva way,  
May every being tread the path to Buddhahood.

2.

May beings everywhere who suffer  
Torment in their minds and bodies  
Have, by virtue of my merit,  
Joy and happiness in boundless measure.

3.

As long as they may linger in saṃsāra,  
May their joy be undiminished;  
May they taste of unsurpassed beatitude  
In constant and unbroken continuity.

4.

Throughout the spheres and reaches of the world,  
In hellish states as many as there are,  
May beings who abide there taste  
The bliss and peace of Sukhāvatī.<sup>[111](#)</sup>

5.

May those caught in the freezing ice be warmed,  
And from great clouds of Bodhisattvas  
Torrents rain in boundless streams  
To cool those burning in infernal fires.

6.

May forests where the leaves are blades and swords  
Become sweet groves and pleasant woodland glades.  
And may the trees of miracles appear,  
Supplanting those upon the hill of Shālmali.<sup>[112](#)</sup>

7.

And may the very pits of hell be sweet  
With fragrant pools all perfumed with the scent of lotuses,  
And lovely with the cries of swan and goose  
And waterfowl so pleasing to the ear.

8.

May fiery coals turn into heaps of jewels,  
The burning ground become an even crystal floor,  
May crushing hills become sublime abodes:  
Offering temples, dwellings of the Buddhas.



9.

May the hail of weapons, lava, fiery stones  
Become henceforth a rain of flowers.  
And all the mutual woundings with sharp blades  
Be now a rain of flowers thrown in play.

10.

And those engulfed in fiery Vaitaraṇī,  
Their flesh destroyed, their bones bleached white as kunda flowers,  
May they, through all my merits' strength, have godlike forms  
And sport with goddesses in Mandākinī's peaceful streams.<sup>113</sup>

11.

"What fear is it," they'll ask, "that grips the henchmen of the Deadly Lord,  
the frightful vultures, and the carrion crows?  
What noble strength is it that brings us joy and drives away our dreadful night?"  
And looking skyward they will see the shining form of Vajrapāṇi.  
Then may their sins be quenched in joy and may they go to him.

12.

And when they see the seething lava-flood of hell  
Extinguished in a rain of blossoms, drenched in fragrant streams,  
At once fulfilled in bliss, they'll ask, "How can this be?"  
May then the denizens of hell behold the One Who Holds the Lotus.<sup>114</sup>

13.

"Friends, throw away your fears and quickly gather here.  
For who is it who comes to us to banish dread,  
this gleaming youth with bound-up hair,  
This loving Bodhisattva saving and protecting every being,  
Whose power relieves all pain, bestowing joy?

14.

"Behold the hundred gods who lay their crowns before his lotus feet,  
The rain of flowers that falls upon his head, his eyes moist with compassion,  
The splendor of his house that echoes praises of a thousand goddesses!"  
May those in hell thus cry on seeing Mañjughoṣha.

15.

And likewise, through my roots of virtue,  
Seeing Bodhisattvas like Samantabhadra, free from stain,  
Those clouds of bliss all laden with a cooling scented rain,  
May all those languishing in hell come now to perfect joy.

16.

And may the stooping animals be freed  
From fear of being preyed upon, each other's food.  
And may the famished spirits have such joy  
As those who dwell within the northern continent.<sup>115</sup>

17.

And may they be replete and satisfied  
By streams of milk that pour  
From noble Lord Avalokita's hand,  
And bathing in it, may they be refreshed and cooled.

18.

And may the blind receive their sight,  
And may the deaf begin to hear,  
And women near their time bring forth,  
Like Māyādevī,<sup>116</sup> free from all travail.

19.

And may the naked now be clothed,  
And all the hungry eat their fill.  
And may those parched with thirst receive  
Pure waters and delicious drink.

20.

May the poor and destitute find wealth,  
The haggard and the careworn, joy.  
May those now in despair be whole in mind,  
Endowed with sterling constancy.

21.

May every being ailing with disease  
Be freed at once from every malady.  
May every sickness that afflicts the living  
Be wholly and forever absent from the world.

22.

May those who go in dread have no more fear.  
May captives be unchained and now set free.  
And may the weak receive their strength.  
May living beings help each other in kindness.

23.

May travelers upon the road  
Find happiness no matter where they go,  
And may they gain, without the need of toil,  
The goals on which they set their hearts.

24.

May those who put to sea in boat or ship,  
Attain the ports that they desire,  
And may they safely come to shore  
And sweet reunion with their kith and kin.

25.

May those who lose their way and wander  
In the wild find fellow travelers.

And safe from threat of thieves and savage beasts,  
May they be tireless and their journey light.

26.

May children and the aged, and all those without protection  
Wandering in the fearful, pathless wastes,  
Who fall asleep unconscious of their peril,  
Have pure celestial beings as their guardians.

27.

May all be freed from states of bondage,  
May they be possessed of wisdom, faith, and love.  
With perfect sustenance and conduct,  
May they always have remembrance of their former lives.

28.

May everyone have unrestricted wealth  
Just like the treasury of space,  
Enjoying it according to their wish,  
Without a trace of harm or enmity.

29.

May beings destitute of splendor,  
Be magnificent and bright.  
And those who suffer from deformity  
Acquire great beauty and perfection.

30.

May all the women of the world  
Attain the strength of masculinity.<sup>117</sup>  
And may the lowly come to excellence,  
The proud and haughty lose their arrogance.

31.

And thus by all the merit I have gained,  
May every being, leaving none aside,  
Abandon all their evil ways  
Embracing goodness now and ever more.

32.

From bodhichitta may they never separate,  
And constantly engage in Bodhisattva actions.  
May they be accepted as disciples by the Buddhas,  
Drawing back from what is demons' work.

33.

And may these beings, each and every one,  
Enjoy an unsurpassed longevity.  
Living always in contentment,  
May the very name of death be strange to them.

34.

In all the ten directions and on every side  
May groves of wish-fulfilling trees abound,  
Resounding with the sweetness of the Teachings,  
Spoken by the Buddhas and their Bodhisattva heirs.

35.

And may the earth be wholesome everywhere,  
Free from boulders, cliffs, and chasms,  
Flat and even like a level palm,  
And smooth like lapis lazuli.

36.

For many circles of disciples,  
May multitudes of Bodhisattvas  
Live in every land,  
Adorning them with every excellence.

37.

From birdsong and the sighing of the trees,  
From shafts of light and from the sky itself,  
May living beings, each and every one,  
Perceive the constant sound of Dharma.

38.

And always may they come into the presence of the Buddhas,  
And meet with Bodhisattvas, offspring of the same.  
With clouds of offerings unbounded,  
May the teachers of the world be worshipped.

39.

May kindly spirits bring the rains on time,  
For harvests to be rich and plentiful.  
May princes rule according to the Dharma;  
May the world be blessed with all prosperity.

40.

May medicines be full of strength;  
May secret words of power be chanted with success.  
May spirits of the air that feed on flesh  
Be kind, their minds imbued with pity.

41.

May beings never suffer anguish.  
Let them not be sick nor evilly behave.  
May they have no fear, nor suffer insults.  
Always may their minds be free from sorrow.

42.

In monasteries, temples, and the like,  
May reading and reciting widely flourish.

May harmony prevail among the Saṅgha;  
May its purposes be all fulfilled.

43.

May ordained monks, intent upon the practice,  
Find perfect places for retreat in solitude,  
Abandon every vagrant thought,  
And meditate with trained and serviceable minds.

44.

May nuns have all their wants supplied;  
May quarreling and spite be strange to them.  
Let all who have embraced monastic life  
Uphold a pure and unimpaired observance.

45.

May those who break their discipline repent,  
And always may they strive to cleanse away their faults.  
And thus may they acquire a fortunate rebirth,  
Wherein to practice stainless discipline.

46.

May wise and learned beings be revered,  
And always be sustained by alms.  
May they be pure in mind,  
And may their fame spread far and wide.

47.

May beings never languish in the lower realms,  
May pain and hardship be unknown to them.  
With bodies greater than the gods,  
May they attain enlightenment without delay.

48.

May beings time and time again  
Make offerings to all the Buddhas.  
And with the Buddha's unimagined bliss  
May they enjoy undimmed and constant happiness.

49.

May all the Bodhisattvas now fulfill  
Their high intention for the sake of wanderers.  
May sentient beings now obtain  
All that their Guardians wish for them.

50.

And may the Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas<sup>118</sup>  
Gain their perfect happiness.

51.

And till, through Mañjughoṣha's perfect kindness,  
I attain the ground of Perfect Joy,<sup>119</sup>

May I remember all my lives  
And enter into the monastic state.

52.  
Thus may I abide, sustained  
By simple, ordinary fare.  
And in every life obtain  
A dwelling place in perfect solitude.

53.  
Whenever I desire to gaze on him  
Or put to him the slightest question,  
May I behold with unobstructed sight  
My own protector Mañjughoṣha.

54.  
To satisfy the needs of beings  
Dwelling in the ten directions, to the margins of the sky,  
May I reflect in all my deeds  
The perfect exploits of Mañjushrī.

55.  
And now as long as space endures,  
As long as there are beings to be found,  
May I continue likewise to remain  
To drive away the sorrows of the world.

56.  
The pains and sorrows of all wandering beings—  
May they ripen wholly on myself.  
And may the virtuous company of Bodhisattvas  
Always bring about the happiness of beings.

57.  
May the Doctrine, only cure for sorrow,  
Source of every bliss and happiness,  
Be blessed with wealth, upheld with veneration,  
And throughout a vast continuance of time, endure!

58.  
And now to Mañjughoṣha I prostrate,  
Whose kindness is the wellspring of my good intent.  
And to my virtuous friends I also bow  
Whose inspiration gave me strength to grow.

*This completes the Bodhisattvacharyavatara, The Way of the Bodhisattva, which was composed by the master Shāntideva.*

*The text was translated, edited, and finalized in Tibetan on the basis of a manuscript from Kashmir by the Indian scholar Sarvajñādeva and the monk, translator, and editor Kawa Peltsek. At a later time, this version was revised and finalized in accordance with the version from*

*Magadha, together with its commentary, by the Indian scholar Dharmashrībhadra and the Tibetan monks, translators and editors, Rinchen Zangpo and Shākya Lodrö. Still later, it was again revised and finalized by the Indian scholar Sumatikīrti and the monk, translator, and editor Ngok Loden Sherab.*<sup>[120](#)</sup>



## OM MANI PADME HUNG HRIH



Reading and studying the instructions of the Buddha or to offer them to others is spiritual practice.

May the Buddhas delight in this gift and grant their blessings.

May the merit created by this action join the stream of merits of all the wholesome deeds performed by limitless beings in countless realms since beginningless time.

Thus, we dedicate this vast ocean of virtue and merits for the sake of the Enlightenment of all sentient beings.